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**UNWORKABLE FORMULA? DECENTRALIZATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE
CONSERVATION IN SEHLABATHEBE, LESOTHO**

MSc DISSERTATION
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND
GEOGRAPHICAL SCIENCES

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So, in the words of Mamdani (1998), 'When I asked myself while writing this as to what these continuing influences have nurtured in this common ground, I could come up with only one answer: what it means to hold convictions with doggedness but without dogma.'

Abstract

Lesotho like many developing African countries is in search of innovative ways to satisfy both its development and conservation objectives. It is generally accepted that meaningful and rapid development is possible only if it is planned and implemented from below by the people expected to be the beneficiaries of such development. Development is best achieved through decentralisation (Maro 1990). This dissertation explores the intersection between decentralisation, development and natural resource management. The Sehlabathebe National Park in the Qacha's Nek district has been the preferred study area because it is; firstly, home to Lesotho's first national park and secondly, there is ongoing activity by way of resource conservation in the area. The dissertation will engage with the public policy and development literature to explore the changing meanings of governance and development but more importantly, to fill a gap in the development, conservation and governance literature in the context of (rural) Lesotho. The dissertation argues that while both natural resource conservation and state decentralisation employ bottom-up development approaches, the two are driven by two differing ideologies, being conservation and decentralisation respectively. The dissertation therefore situates itself in the development literature with particular emphasis on conservation and governance.

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Abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ARMADE	Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas
BCP	Basotho Congress Party
BNP	Basotho National Party
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
ERMA	Environment Resources Management Associations
GNI	Gross National Income
GoL	Government of Lesotho
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Deficiency Syndrome

IUCN	World Conservation Union
LMPS	Lesotho Mounted Police Service
MDTP	Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project
MOLG	Ministry of Local Government
NEP	National Environmental Policy
NGO	Non - Government Organization
PPF	Peace Parks Foundation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSI	Population Services International
PSIRP	Public Sector Improvement Reform Programme
RMA	Range Management Area
RMD	Range Management Division
RWS	Rural Water Supply
SNP	Sehlabathebe National Park
TBCA	Transboundary Conservation Area
TBNRM	Transboundary Natural Resource Management
VHW	Village Health Workers

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale for the Study

The historic local government elections held on April 30, 2005 heralded in a new local government system in Lesotho. With that, the future of natural resource management and conservation (amongst many other social issues) has become contentious to (local) resource users and conservationists alike. One of the aims of decentralisation is to increase public participation in local decision-making. This aim is realised through the exercise of elections, which are seen as a process by which the public can freely elect an individual whom they believe will represent their needs and interests in national government – therefore essentially mirroring the needs of the local populace at national level. The claim is that ‘public participation, coupled with locally accountable representatives with real public powers, will increase efficiency and equity in the use of public resources’ (Agarwal and Ribot 1999:33). In efforts to realise increased efficiency and equity, the Lesotho Government has embarked on a long-term development plan that will guide the country’s national policies – National Vision 2020. The National Vision was executed in January 2001 wherein a dialogue on the development of a national vision was held with participants representing various government departments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), as well as a wide range of other stakeholders throughout the country¹.

Through decentralisation, Lesotho not only hopes to realize its national vision by 2020, but also to ‘create an environment that enables a participatory approach to development policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring. It is for this reason that the Government of Lesotho remains committed to introducing Local Government as a pivotal strategy to implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Public Sector Improvement Reform Programme (PSIRP)’ (GOL 2003:1). These programmes are interdependent and influence the use and conservation of natural resources in the country. The Government of Lesotho (GOL) hopes that,

¹ See <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/articles/vision%2020.Executive%20Summary.htm>.

amongst other things, the sustainable use of natural resources and their preservation can in turn aid in poverty reduction, especially in the resource-dependent communities of the country.

In this study, decentralisation of governance and natural resource management are interrogated through a focus on the possible changes in consumption and conservation of natural resources. This focus will illuminate problems that may be anticipated for the country's natural resources, particularly water, land and forests that are managed by structures of chieftaincy within boundaries that are often not clearly defined.

According to the Programme for Implementation of Local Government in Lesotho,

The new local governments will need to have clearly defined areas of jurisdiction in order to perform their roles and functions effectively. Furthermore, in order to enhance the participation of communities in issues of local development and governance, it is critical to have in place clearly defined boundaries within which communities can participate (GOL 2003:8).

The *Programme for Implementation of Local Government in Lesotho* (2003:2) further states the country's objectives of decentralisation as follows:

- i. To bring and widen public access to the structures of government;
- ii. To bring services closer to the people thereby improving service delivery;
- iii. To promote people's participation in decision-making, planning and implementation of development programmes, thus giving the electorate greater control over the development process;
- iv. To promote equitable development in all parts of the country through the distribution of human, institutional and infrastructural resources.

The possible change of village boundaries and the areas of jurisdiction of chiefs could cause ambiguity in the use, control and ownership of natural resources ownership. Sheridan (2004:82) indicates that the material, social and cultural legacies of such ambiguity could include environmental change, declining management capacity and persistent doubt about the value of conservation. This dissertation therefore places emphasis on the connection between decentralisation, development, resource

management and the conflicts therein – which is a relationship that is often not clearly articulated when discussing decentralisation challenges. By exploring this relationship, I seek to demonstrate the interplay of various national programmes and policies in protected areas in Lesotho.

The bulk of Lesotho's natural resources are found in the country's largely mountainous rural areas, most of which are under the control of local chiefs. The role of chiefs in the use and conservation of resources in Lesotho is therefore crucial in realising both poverty alleviation and human development. The new local government structure aims to establish conditions for new democratic and accountable structures, with significant community participation. The various actors holding power over natural resources, the kinds of power they hold, the degree of community participation and the accountability relations and accountability to which these actors are subject to are expected to change the face of the use and conservation of natural resources forever (see Ntsebeza 2002). Research is needed to examine the various possible outcomes of decentralisation.

The MDTP offers a useful medium through which to assess the implications of decentralisation on natural resource management because:

- There is ongoing work by the MDTP in resource management in Lesotho;
- The project accommodates local chiefs and local community councilors alike in its resource management efforts; and
- The project is aimed at the development and alleviation of poverty primarily through eco-tourism.

It is clear from the objectives of the Programme for Implementation of Local Government in Lesotho that Lesotho is working towards a 'stable democracy' and is therefore seemingly involved in a development project. Like the post-1994 South African state, Lesotho has committed itself to the establishment of a democratic, representative, and accountable form of governance throughout the country. Given Lesotho's history of colonialism and rural area administration dominated by traditional authority – chiefs and headmen, the development task is at best a most challenging endeavor for this developing nation (See Ntsebeza 2001).

Development literature will be reviewed in grounding the study and to analyze the implications of the above stated objectives firstly, on the practice of natural resource conservation in Lesotho and secondly, the natural resource user whom the decentralisation process is targeted at developing.

Using the public policy and decentralisation bodies of literature, the study will look at the meaning(s) of governance and development by both the MDTP as a conservation body and local resource users. This is important if the needs of the locals are to be properly addressed and their development fully realized.

Given Lesotho's young history of democracy and development, the study contextualizes the governance structure of Lesotho from independence to date by engaging with governance literature in the third world context. In addition, the study draws on the country's natural resource management plans in order to appreciate fully the role of the MDTP and that of the Sehlabathebe National Park in development. Using these foundations will confirm the significance of the research both in filling the gap in literature and in the relevance of empirical research in understanding development of Lesotho.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

Both natural resource conservation and decentralisation are developmental tools. Similarly, both are spatial and therefore take form within a set of boundaries. However, the ideologies behind both natural resource conservation and the decentralisation of the state often differ with respect to realising development. Furthermore, although both natural resource conservation and decentralisation are space bounded, even the boundaries within which they are played out are often not complementary. The research therefore grapples with the challenges that the ideological differences of conservation and decentralisation present to development as it unfolds on the ground.

1.3. Aims of the study

The research aims to investigate decentralisation and natural resource conservation as strategies of development, emphasizing how that relationship is articulated in protected areas in Lesotho. The Sehlabathebe (Wildlife Sanctuary) National Park in the Qacha's Nek district is the chosen case study area for three major reasons:

- i. The SNP was established in 1970 in an attempt to resolve conflicts in the management of both people and resources of the then ruling regime under Leabua Jonathan. The current processes of decentralisation through local government and development through conservation. Therefore, new institutional arrangements will have far-reaching implications on the management and use of natural resources in SNP and its surrounding area. Against this backdrop, the relationship between theory and practice and its implications for natural resource use and conservation is central to the study;
- ii. The Sehlabathebe National Park (SNP) in the Qacha's Nek district has been one of the focal points in the (Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project) MDTP in Lesotho and there have been economic and conservation activities in the area. The MDTP is a collaborative initiative between South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho to protect the exceptional biodiversity of the Drakensberg and Maloti mountains through conservation, sustainable resource use, and land-use and development planning (<http://www.maloti.org/bi/description.htm>). The MDTP is discussed in greater detail in chapter four of this report; and
- iii. There have been proposals to formally enclose the park area. At present, the park is fenced but the fencing has been cut in some places and has been destroyed in others because of human trespassing. Enclosing the park area will formalise, further restrict the use of natural resources within the area, and possibly have implications for the communities' livelihood sustenance and pressure on the resources outside the confines of the park.

1.4. Research Design and Objectives

In order to facilitate the analysis of the intersections between decentralisation, development and natural resource conservation, qualitative research methods were employed. The study is premised on a set of objectives and assumptions, outlined below.

The research proceeds from the viewpoint that state decentralisation and natural resource conservation are developmental tools aimed at rural community development, but often conflict on the ground because of their different ideological foundations. At the theoretical level, the research intends to achieve the following objectives:

- a. Explore the relationship between decentralisation, conservation and development; and
- b. To analyze ideological differences underpinning decentralisation in resource conservation and local government.

On the empirical level, the research seeks to:

- a. Understand and appreciate the history and practice of governance in Lesotho and its impacts on natural resource management in the country;
- b. Identify and understand the roles that the different stakeholders play in the development project in Sehlabathebe; and
- c. Observe the challenges which development faces in Sehlabathebe and how these are tackled using natural resource conservation and the existing local government authorities.

1.5. Research Assumptions

The research assumes the following:

- a. Participation in natural resource conservation is constrained by centralized governance. Local government therefore gives communities greater decision-making power.

- b. Rural community development strategies are directly related to the communities' participation and needs. Both local government and community based natural resource management (CBNRM) are vital in overseeing and facilitating communities' accountability.
- c. Conservation ideology revolves more around resource preservation while decentralisation ideology is political.

The advent of new local government in Lesotho means that there is a gap in the literature on local government and on the relationship between natural resource conservation and (local) governance in the country. I am hopeful that this research will be useful in bridging the apparent gap in the literature. The study will therefore explore local government restructuring as an alternative tool to ordering not only people but also the physical environment and especially the resources on which they depend. By focusing on local government restructuring and resource conservation, the study could contribute to policies that are suitable for the development needs of the Basotho people and the country's development strategy.

1.6. Organization of the dissertation

Chapter Two reviews literature to provide the background to the study. It focuses primarily on ideas of development and conservation, and highlights these ideas tools for development – particularly in the context of the African state.

Chapter Three discusses the methods employed in the study, defines the key variables in the research and highlights the challenges encountered during the research.

In Chapter Four, I analyse and interpret data collected during the research at Sehlabathebe in November and December 2005. The focus of the chapter is on the decentralisation of the state and natural resource conservation in Sehlabathebe.

Chapter Five summarises empirical and theoretical viewpoints presented in the various chapters of this dissertation. The summary is followed by conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The development of natural resource conservation has resulted in a search for more innovative and sustainable ways of realizing both social and economic advancement in nations' development imperatives, particularly in developing countries (Mombeshora 2005; Murombedzi 2003; Schafer and Bell 2002). Research in natural resource conservation has also focused on citizen participation and access to the resources by its beneficiaries, often the local residents. The need to conserve natural resources for future use and generations (sustainable development) drives the idea of community participation in natural resource conservation and this has come about more because of development. This link is particularly necessary as a development tool in today's capitalist world economy where the demand for natural resources for industry and trade have led to a scarcity and even depletion of some resources. However, much like many development approaches, the *conservation for development*² strategy continues to show many flaws in its application as often the resources under conservation have long-standing users whose livelihoods are highly reliant on such resources. For example, the flaws of that strategy become evident in the choice of spaces to conserve: who is to have access to the conserved resources (if at all anyone)? Most importantly perhaps is the issue of the alternatives that are open to the long-standing resource users.

The literature reviewed in this chapter makes sense of resource conservation and (state) decentralisation as approaches to local community development. While resource conservation is largely driven by the desire to preserve natural resources and to influence such a culture amongst users, decentralisation is often two-pronged, firstly to extend social and economic needs to all people and make them more

² The conservation for development strategy is premised on the idea that the loss of biodiversity is closely related to development challenges such as conflict and poverty. This problematic link therefore requires integrated strategies – of which protected area management and the integration of local communities has been one (Adams et. al 2004).

accountable of such services, and secondly (the state) to protect environmental quality.

While the development school of thought drives both state decentralisation and natural resource conservation, they are rooted in different ideas of development with state decentralisation being politically motivated while natural resource conservation is preservationist³. The discussion therefore explores the different ideologies that inform both natural resource conservation and political decentralisation.

By first exploring the idea of development itself, it becomes clearer why it has widely failed in its many forms. Using this as a point of departure, state decentralisation and natural resource conservation are explored as development initiatives. The analysis then evaluates the politics of natural resource conservation in the southern African context. This is perhaps useful not only because it is the region in which the study is located, but also because of the increase in conservation activity in the region – particularly in transfrontier conservation initiatives.

Similarly, the idea of decentralisation is explored in the southern African context. This is particularly important because for a long time many southern African countries have grappled with issues of good governance and many authors have indicated ways in which the region's governance has stood in the way of many development efforts (Enemuo 2000; Manor 1999; Hyden 1999). Drawing on the idea of the modern state, I trace the idea of protecting natural resources to the early states' imperatives, chief of which were territorial and protectionist. However, with economic expansion and ideas of economic development, natural resources are preserved for ecological, social and economic imperatives, albeit with much less state influence and involvement. I highlight two other creations of changing state imperatives and natural resource management in today's states. Natural resource conservation and people-centered development approaches have also given birth to the ideas of transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM) and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM).

³ I note however that often a distinction is made between conservation as sustainable resource use while preservation is seen as an attempt to maintain the earth's present condition. See: http://www.ace.mmu.ac.uk/eae/Sustainability/Older/Conservation_and_Preservation.html

2.2. The Idea of development

The problems of development are complex and the search for solutions is a continuing challenge to national governments and donor agencies alike. The forces currently shaping the world are not necessarily restricted to the traditional apparatus of the state, but encompass organizations, institutions, structures and groups outside it, current debates on development questions are increasingly focusing on the dimensions of governance. Thus, the development discourse is moving away from the narrow economic parameters of the past (Cheema 2005). The move from economically based development is particularly visible at local levels in many developing countries wherein ecological conservation is increasingly becoming popular in bringing about development.

The development of natural resource conservation has resulted in research directed at its various functions, chief of which have been economic and preservationist. Such research has largely focused on natural resource conservation particularly the rural areas in developing countries (Mombeshora 2005; Murombedzi 2003; Schafer and Bell 2002). The focus on natural resource conservation has focused on the ways in which natural resources can be conserved while simultaneously addressing the socio-economic problems of rural areas in the developing countries. Natural resource conservation research has also emphasized the role of participation and access to natural resources by its beneficiaries, often the local residents. Much of the research has therefore involved the range of stakeholders or actors in the management of natural resources, which include among others, government, the private sector, conservationists, donors, NGOs and rural communities. These alliances have been at the heart of the potential of nature tourism (in transboundary parks and conservation) towards the development of rural areas.

National governments have been the key players in the promotion of natural resource conservation as a developmental tool. According to Oliveira (2002:1713), 'governments have two apparently conflicting roles to play: promoter of economic development and protector of environmental quality. These roles are particularly

complex in developing countries because the state is often weak and inefficient'. Furthermore, the state in developing countries is generally faced with life threatening conditions such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and infant mortality to name a few. In such cases, concerns with the protection of environmental quality tend to be sidelined.

However, 'at the beginning of the 21st century, as global environmental change proceeds at an unprecedented pace, conservation has emerged as a central element in the civic and political debates in the nations of both the North and the South' (Brosius and Russell 2003:40). The debate has largely focused on ways in which the third world state can be developed. A range of definitions for development have therefore been put forth. However, as Shanin (1997:68) indicates, 'the impact of the idea of progress (involving, as it did, modernization theory) development strategy, the goal of economic growth, and so on was threefold: as a general orientation device, as a powerful tool of mobilization, and as an ideology'. For the purposes of this discussion, the development strategy is considered in ideological terms.

While there are different views of development, this dissertation focuses primarily on two views: the modernization and the political view. As Shale (2004:2) puts it, '...there are many ways in which development is defined by various scholars and practitioners. The commonality in most definitions is that development is regarded as the improvement of the social and economic lives of the people'. This suggests then that there is a need for change in the social institutions that people follow. This notion reflects the modernization theory according to which a range of ancillary political, social, religious, legal and cultural institutions need to be created by the development project. 'These institutions therefore steer the modernization of the mind – it (*modernization*) requires revision of the attitudes, modes of conduct and institutions adverse to material progress' (Cole 1999:157). The modernist view of development therefore seeks to fulfill individuals' potentials.

The modernization view goes further to differentiate society as made up of those people considered independent and those that are dependent. According to this view, those living in a society in which they have to learn to cooperate to survive, rather than compete to further their own advantage are seen as a reflection of the society that they live in as opposed to judging them as having an innate genetic endowment (Cole

1999). The modernist view of development also dictates that in order for society to take better advantage of its resources and realize people's social potentials, society needs to be organized. Clearly this view if applied to the third world context, advocates communalism but sees the existing communal networks as inefficient. This paradigm therefore essentially questions a nation's governance as seen through its populace as opposed to individual capabilities.

Similarly, there is the political view of development that argues that people are interdependent within society: 'they differentiate themselves and become of their individuality through social interaction' (Cole 1999:161). Therefore, as long as there is social change and progress, people with shared interests will organize themselves to challenge the relationships of power in society, which obstruct their productive capacity. Such a struggle may be towards a certain form of development. Indeed, development projects normally assume certain power relations as given, to allow the disadvantaged a little more opportunity to fulfill their potential. However, the notion of change attached to development gives the development project greater power and leeway to exercise than the disadvantaged to whom power is meant to be filtered down.

The development theory is therefore rigged with difference and complexities, often understood to reflect the perceptions of the individual users' interests. In the first place, the language used in development studies (and any other field of knowledge) is plagued by ambiguities and inconsistencies, which lead to confusion, misunderstanding and conflict in [theory and praxis]. In addition, however, there is a more complex and obscure problem, since language has social and political overtones, which enable it to be used as a means of exercising power and influence over others. Firstly, the most obvious examples are the words related to development itself – 'developed,' 'developing,' 'less developed,' 'underdeveloped,' and so on (Conyers 1986; Shanin 1997). All these words are vague and ambiguous, especially when considered in the historical context, and they are value-laden. Secondly, the way in which the words 'underdeveloped' and 'underdevelopment' have changed in meaning over the last 20 years or so is particularly significant. However, 'there are numerous other less obvious examples and these are, in many respects, the most dangerous ones, since the people using them (and those to whom they direct their discourse) are less

aware of their implications' (Conyers 1986:594). For example, Shanin (1997) indicates that the idea of progress interacted powerfully with the 'industrial revolution', urbanization and as such with the spread of colonialism. 'This fed into the various political divisions and, moving with the times, entered the newly created academic disciplines of the social sciences, sociology, anthropology, economics – taking the form of modernization theories, 'strategies of development' and programs of 'growth' (Shanin 1997:68). Notwithstanding the above-mentioned complexities, development continues to inform much of the political and ecological practices in many developing countries. This can perhaps be attributed to the following reasons:

1. Governments of developing countries are looking to environmental management and resource conservation as a way of promoting social upliftment and to encourage community participation in decision-making (Oliveira 2002; Toulmin and Quan 2000; Manor 1999).
2. It is argued that access to resources is shaped both by the political economy and by social relations and is, itself, acted out as a social and political process. Thus, in the context of economic crisis and environmental change in Africa we should be considering the means that people employ to gain access to the resources that they need to survive (Yngstrom 1999:15). Decentralisation (and its essentialisation of local participation and accountability) has been widely used as a tool to enable people's access to basic (natural) resources.
3. The powerful world nations have been highly influential in the economic processes of developing nations under the pretext of promoting development, often in a manner that forges a dependency of the 'less developed' on the 'developed' country. For example, it is widely agreed that contrary to being developmental, the policies of international institutions - such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and its Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) - have largely undermined the needs of the social needs of developing countries chiefly because economics is driven largely by politics (see Shah 2005; Joeng 1996; Callaghy 1984).

The link between development and conservation therefore becomes explicit wherein ecological conservation is as a means of overcoming development crises such as poverty and livelihood sustenance while simultaneously achieving (social and ecological) sustainable development. The issue is, therefore, not that development strategies or projects could or should have been better planned or implemented. It is that development as it imposed itself on its 'target population' was the wrong answer to their needs and aspirations. It was an ideology that was born and refined in the North, mainly to meet the needs of the dominant powers in search of a more 'appropriate' tool for their economic and geopolitical expansion (Rahnema 1997:379). Murombedzi (2003) argues that as colonialism progressed, it brought about challenges to the (African) people on whom it was imposed. Perhaps the biggest challenge was land expropriation as it brought rise to poverty. Without land of their own, it was more difficult for African people to produce their own food. Furthermore, land dispossession often meant that the available land for cultivation was over cultivated and ultimately damaged. Even today, many African states are faced with the poverty problem as a chief result of colonial land expropriation. The decentralisation (of the state apparatus and conservation) has increasingly come to the fore of the development debate in developing countries.

2.2.1. State decentralisation as development

Similar to development, the definition(s) and understanding(s) of development vary according to the theories that people use (Shale 2004). What is common however is the view that decentralisation is particularly essential in the development institutions of developing countries because of their history of inefficiency in governance and hence the shift to democratic governance as advocated by the development school of thought (Okoth Ogendero 2000; Hyden and Bratton 2000; Tordoff 1997). Decentralisation refers to the restructuring of authority so that it is shared between governing institutions at the central, regional, and local levels. Decentralising government is thought to be conducive to good governance, although experience suggests that decentralisation alone is no guarantee of good governance. Decentralisation can be a means to encourage participation in the public policy process and can hold governments more accountable for their actions. At the same time, decentralisation enables local officials to take responsibility for economic and

social development. For instance, decentralisation can foster a more efficient use of resources if projects are locally conceived, and economic performance can be improved since local entrepreneurship tends to flourish in decentralised settings where there is often greater access to credit and information on business opportunities (Cheema 2005). Furthermore, there are different approaches to decentralisation, which are: devolution, deconcentration, delegation and divestment. However, the form of decentralisation that this study is concerned with is devolution, which is defined as giving local units of government autonomous, independent, and legally recognised geographical boundaries. Central authorities exercise little or no direct control over these local units. The lower level authorities are therefore largely or wholly independent of higher levels of government to some degree or in some way (Manor 1999; Cheema 2005).

Therefore, decentralisation can be adopted as the transfer of responsibility, power and resources from central government to local citizens that give them inter-alia, an opportunity to formulate and implement their own development programs (Shale 2004). Nickson (in Manor 1999:6) argues that, 'the decentralisation of resources and responsibilities without... (democratizing) political reforms would be incomplete and, probably, not conducive to socially effective results.' When such participatory arrangements exist, they inject some democratic content into the system. These include efforts by local authorities to seek information on community needs and ways of addressing them, to establish local committees and coordinate community involvement in projects, and to organize disenfranchised groups in order to assist them in voicing demands (Manor 1999). Therefore, decentralisation is aligned with development theory in its aim of assisting the 'disenfranchised' in realizing their potentials.

2.2.2. Natural resource conservation as development

Natural resource conservation is driven by differing philosophical strands. In developing countries, it is seen as influenced by development wherein globalization has caught up with developing countries (Duffy 2001; Baber 2001). Amongst the numerous factors attributed to natural resource conservation in the southern African region, Katerere et al. (2001:4) indicate 'the external factors such as globalization and

the agendas of international donors and organizations'. This external influence has contributed to the growing popularity of transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM). TBNRM essentialises the co-management of natural resources across the borders of neighboring countries, and can be defined as thus:

Any process of cooperation across boundaries that facilitates or improves the management of natural resources (to the benefit of all parties in the area concerned) Griffin et al. 1999 (in Katerere et al. 2001:12).

Notwithstanding this broad definition, it is useful to note that TBNRM can be based on the different type initiatives that it is targeted at and on the goals the different proponents for which they are established.

The decentralisation view of natural resource management was originally based on the argument that the widespread neglect of wildlife was resultant of no legal value to landholders and CBNRM sought to legitimize land management for the sustainable use of wildlife (Child 2004). Of late, the same management narrative is seen through TBNRM initiatives according to which it is imperative to have good community to state and state to (neighboring) state relations for the successful implementation of natural resource conservation. This suggests that the establishment of nature reserves and transfrontier parks for example, are intrinsically politically driven rather than simply ecological processes. However, Hutton and Roe (2005) present a divergent view to the decentralisation view of natural resource management. The authors argue that there has been no compatibility between natural resource conservation and development and therefore leaving no other alternative but a return to colonial conservation which was characterized by fences and fines, and which did not involve people in the conservation exercise.

'The seemingly neutral language of *ecosystems* masks fundamental political and economic interests at play in the exploitation of wildlife resources in (developing countries in) Africa as in other places' (Hutton and Roe. 2005). Conservation strategies have evolved from a fines and fences approach to more decentralised approaches such as CBNRM (op cit.).

The pressure for decentralisation reveals that decentralisation is a means of developing coherent and systematically ordered spaces upon which political and ecological ideas may be realized. The problem however lies in the difference in ideology and interests informing political transformation and ecology through decentralisation. The difference in ideology is therefore problematic in space where state constituency boundaries are drawn along the lines of political influence with an interest to extend state control and perhaps enforce national unity and allegiance to the state. Ecological boundaries on the other hand may be drawn along animal and plant existence patterns (bioregions) and thus not necessarily following politically motivated borders.

2.3. Environment and the state

In spite of apparently declining public interest in environmental issues at local levels, concern about 'environmental security' seems to be growing at the state level (Warner 1999:247). As Homer-Dixon (1994) warns, with the increase of the human population, so will increase the scarcities of renewable resources. In contrast to Warner (op. cit), Homer-Dixon concludes the following:

'...environmental scarcity causes conflict. This conflict tends to be persistent, diffuse, and sub-national' (ibid 1994:34).

What is evident however is that the idea of security therefore implies a call for protection. The implementation of protection in the name of environmental security can therefore be constructed and essentialised not only to further environmental security concerns but also with an aim to maintain peace and security among nations. The state therefore often assumes the role of environmental securer. In contrast, Warner (1999) argues that the state assumes this role to drive material interests that can be linked to different political agendas. However, because political dominance in environmental security cannot be achieved by coercive means (Dalby 1992), there are advanced in a blanket reformulation of the 'common good'. Before exploring the theories employed to justify environmental security as well as the role of the state, it is important to highlight that environmental issues have not always been part of the state's imperatives.

2.3.1. The (Early) Westphalian State⁴

The early state imperatives were primarily based on internal order and revenue. Internal order was ensured by prioritizing external security. However, 'it dawned on policy makers that most conflicts are not battled out between states but within states. It was noted that, world-wide, governments do not so much fight each other as confront domestic opposition, and that not infrequently these conflicts are the result of a struggle over 'natural resources' (Buzan et al. in Warner 1999:245). Similarly, as Dalby (1992:505) puts it, '...the possibility of the political community in which the 'good life' can be debated and struggled over is limited to within states; beyond the boundaries of the state is an anarchy of power politics and external threats'. The Westphalian state therefore essentialised internal security, 'and the practices of states *were* tied to notions of international law that grant complete control over what went on inside a state' (ibid: emphasis added).

The second major imperative of the state was to raise revenue primarily to finance both internal and external order. 'This gave rise to debate about how environmental resources may become the objects of security objectives' (Warner 1999:249). The revenue-raising imperative of the state gave rise to capitalism, incorporating the environment into the corridors of power. It is on this basis that it has been argued that prioritizing environmental security overburdens states, giving them Orwellian power (Warner 1999). Dryzek (2005) indicates that Marxists expected that the state's prioritization of the environment would cause a revolution but produced a working class instead. This shift in the state's priorities gave it a more capitalist outlook, the result of which enabled the entry of the bourgeoisie - producing goods and consumables and in turn pushing up the demand of goods and services and commodifying inputs. The state was therefore transformed to become capitalist. With the increased demand on natural resources (as inputs) in the capitalist state, non-realist political scientists argue that the issue of the environment was depoliticized so that the state could intervene under the pretext of concern regarding environmental issues and the need to secure resources. Warner (1999) sees this as a way in which the

⁴ The Westphalian state is a system of political authority based on territory and autonomy. Territoriality means that political authority is exercised over a defined geographical space rather than, for instance, over people, as would be the case in a tribal form of political order (Krasner 1995).

state involves 'existential threats' as a means to release and legitimate financial and political resources and as a consequence legitimate the state. Such transformation of the state as intervening body then again transformed it into a welfare state, enabling the entry of a working class in the state apparatus. It is clear that using the environmental narrative; the state was able to advance several interests including internal order, economic growth and state legitimating while simultaneously increasing security around the physical environment.

2.3.2. The Modern state

According to Warner (1999), the turning point in global environmental politics has been the 'energy crisis' of the 1970s which drove environmental resources up the ladder in political issues. Environmental degradation seemed to trigger conflict, notably in the developing world. The environment has therefore climbed very close to the top of the security agenda by drawing several (often conflicting) paradigms. These paradigms are clearly played out in today's physical and political environments.

By looking at the realist paradigm, the state is seen as self-interested vying for a dominant place in an inherently conflicting international system (Dalby 1992). This view, unlike in the Westphalian state sees the state as fighting for a place in a bigger, international system. Here the state is seen as primarily representative of the dominant power elite. Pluralists on the other hand see the state as porous instead of unitary and instead view it as allowing national as well as sub-, supra-, and national as well as transnational actors into the international scene. 'Instead of a unitary state, pluralism pictures the state as a fragmented multiplicity of actors, with multiple state-society and translational relations both significant such that state and non-state entities are increasingly linked with foreign counterparts. This 'complex interdependence' in turn leads to increasing international co-operation (Warner 1999:250).

Drawing on the idea that the state represents the interests of the dominant power elite by realist ideology, Warner (1999:251) asks: 'How is it possible that increasingly unequal social power relations and conflicting interests continue to exist while the consent of subordinate groups is gained?' Borrowing from the work of Antonio Gramsci, Warner attempts to answer the above question by arguing that 'ideas

legitimize, cement and perpetuate political control structures' (ibid). Here ideas such as conserving the natural resource base (sustainable development) are concepts of control. Gramsci sees governance as coercive (dominant) and consensual (legitimate).

Following Sklair (1998:150):

[t]he mobilization of an active consent for peripheral groups to a given order...is more effective than coercive hegemony as achieved by core interest (in the form of classes, states, transnational actors) through a combination of coercive and consensual means. The latter is built on a system of alliances that must be continually readjusted and renegotiated to prevent peripheral groups from forming counter-hegemonic movement.

The recent shift in natural resource management towards community-based natural resource conservation (particularly in the South) exemplifies the state's coercive and consensual leadership. It is important to note at this point that hegemony is not dominance: it is legitimized leadership. Therefore as Warner (1999:252) simply puts it; 'It allows (*one*) me to go ahead with a social or political project that may be manifestly not in *your* material interests, but make you accept it regardless, perhaps even whole-heartedly as I have persuaded you that it is in your best interests.' By using such persuasion, states are able to convince the peripheral groups to relinquish land and other natural resources to the state for the 'common good'. By (theoretically) drawing these peripheral groups into decision making processes through initiatives such as CBNRM, the idea to conserve resources for example is legitimized⁵. Also, this can be seen as a means of extending state power to the periphery. This has often been coined 'the politics of decentralisation' wherein the central state is seen on one hand as relinquishing power, therefore symbolically allowing peripheral groups to be governed accordingly with its needs and potentials; on the other hand, this is seen as an attempt to influence the periphery which might otherwise be beyond the state's scope of influence.

In this way, 'leadership is accepted if only because an unpopular leader is preferred to instability and chaos' (Warner 1999:252). The state-society relationship in this way

⁵ (CBNRM is discussed further in section 2.6.3 of this chapter).

can be seen as natural where internal order is maintained in the welfare and economic interests of the population and in turn, the state is legitimated. After all the legitimacy of a government is highly related to its ability to mediate risk (Dryzek 2005).

Lastly, the state can be seen as an institution. As Warner (1999:254) indicates, 'states are not simply political institutions, however, they are also institutions: they are Weberian machine bureaucracies geared to standardization, predictability and especially legal-administrative control over resources and people'. For example, the earliest states arose in semi-arid regions to regulate and harness water resources. These states were therefore highly authoritarian and therefore required a great amount of control (ibid).

In recent years however, the globalization of the economy has seen a move towards a model of facilitation. '...[S]tates have increasingly lost control and are now forced to liberalize their economies, thus facilitating rather than dominating the private sector. The public sector is at risk of becoming, as it were 'a sector among many' (Warner 1999:254). States have therefore drawn on place-bound inputs and markets such as sedentary agriculture as these cannot move their production units as easily as financial institutions can. It becomes clear then why there has been increased state commitment and political action in securing natural resources. Thus, by securitizing a resource, the state has an excuse to 'bend the rules' in how state resources can be utilized to consolidate state power and to further its interests and influence over the populace.

2.4. The decentralisation of the African state

In the 1950s and 1960s, aid programmes and academic advisers propagated the idea of the state bureaucracy as the lead agent for the transition to what was then known as 'modernization' (Batley 2004:135). Development journals, including *World Development*, continue to give attention to government decentralisation, the discussion of which is often cast in terms of the 'politics of decentralisation'.

The governments of many developing countries have therefore embarked on what is said to pivot on the politics of decentralizing rural development. This is especially the case in countries undergoing radical economic and political change (Cheema 2005).

In reality, 'the reform is not only about decentralisation or the politics of rural development' (Roe 1995:883) but also the natural resources which often form the core of survival in these rural domains and the institutions that control them.

The government reform in developing countries can be attributed to several factors. In Sub-Saharan Africa for instance, economic stagnation, the fiscal crisis of the state and poverty have caused the collapse of social and physical infrastructures and created a great deal of stress as well as a proliferation of violent conflicts, chronic malnutrition for many, and death by starvation for some (Ake 1994:3). Also, there has been external pressure to reform. For example,

Emphasis on development co-operation took a dramatic turn in the late 1980's towards programmes (the free-market reforms and structural adjustment strategies) which supported long-term adjustment and the fundamental realignment of developing country economies away from interventionism. This involved reducing the role of the state, removing subsidies, privatising state businesses, liberalising prices, and opening borders to the flows of international trade and finance. The state was no longer regarded as the provider of economic and social development, but rather as a partner, catalyst, and facilitator (Ake 1994:4).

In this way, the African state was forced to decentralise. As all national conferences on Africa have shown, they link the continent's misery to leadership performance and they are convinced that their condition will not improve until they empower themselves to intervene in public life for the improvement of their own lives (ibid). However, the empowerment of the public is best realized within the framework of good leadership, which amongst other things is equated to good governance.

2.5. Development and the governance crisis in Africa

Governance has gained particular significance in African development literature and as a result, amongst other things, the World Bank has identified a crisis of

governance⁶ in Africa. 'More specifically, the Bank refers to such phenomena as the extensive personalization of power, the denial of fundamental human rights, widespread corruption, and the prevalence of unelected and unaccountable government in development' (Hyden 1992:5). Sub-Saharan Africa in particular has struggled to realize good governance and therefore to stimulate the participation of society in state bound (governance) processes.

It is widely agreed that the crisis in governance in Africa, and particularly southern Africa, cannot be divorced from Africa's colonial past (Mamdani 1996; Hyden 1992). This is not to say however that the governance crisis has entirely been a result of colonial influence in Africa. Rather it is to suggest that it has been tainted by colonialism and that the spoils of that contact can be seen in many of postcolonial (Sub-Saharan) African states.

Since the colonial state was called upon by the peculiar circumstances of the colonial situation to carry out so many functions – indeed to do everything – it was all-powerful. It needed to be all-powerful not only to carry out its mission but also to survive along with the colonial order in the face of the resentment and the hostility of the colonized (Ake 1996:2).

The colonial state was characterized by its absolutism and arbitrariness. The colonial government therefore did not engender legitimacy or accountability, particularly on the rules around composition of the state in which power lied. 'For everyone in this political arena, security lay only in the accumulation of power...power was made the top priority in all circumstances and sought by all means'. The colonial state therefore did not favor decentralisation because decentralisation would require that power be relinquished to lower levels of governance which at the time were made up mostly of the chieftaincy. 'As the rulers and subordinates extended their rights to their powers, the idea of lawful political competition became impossible, and politics was inevitably reduced to a single issue: the determination of two exclusive claims of rulership' (ibid: 3).

⁶ The discussion follows the idea that at the epicenter of the crisis in Sub Saharan Africa are problems with the system of governance and therefore that there is indeed a governance crisis.

The character of the colonial state did not change significantly at independence since, with few exceptions; the colonial state was inherited rather than transformed. Like the colonizers before them, most of the nationalist leaders regarded the state as the instrument of their will (Ake 1994:7).

According to Hyden (1992), the institutional hallmark of African politics since independence has been '*neo patrimonialism*'. The neo patrimonial system of governance has become quite prevalent in the postcolonial state where the exercise of power in small scale, face-to-face types of traditional communities is due to personal power and prestige (ibid). Hyden further indicates that neo patrimonialism is the most salient type of authority in the third world because it corresponds to the normal forms of social organization in pre-colonial society, and these still prevail in many African countries. The point that Hyden makes is that neo patrimonialism moulds governance to satisfy the needs of those in whose hands the power lies, to the benefit of those with whom the ruling elite have social, cultural or ethnic ties. It is therefore not only segregationist (by restricting transparency in citizen participation) but it is also a flaw in leadership. Neo patrimonialism contributes highly to the crisis of governance in southern Africa. Even with the adoption of a multi party state, the neo-patrimonial style of governance has shown its face through different leaders. This style of governance has been closely correlated to unaccountability, corruption, and exclusion.

'Neo patrimonialism is the opposite of democracy because it is characterized by the absence of public accountability' (Hyden 2000:19). The informal set up of the institution of the state gives way for the personalization of exchange, whether it be in budgets or other public documents, the cost of these personal exchanges is withheld from the public through further dealings or punishment to those threatening to 'spill the beans' to the public about their resources that are being personalized and used to further personal as opposed to national causes. The institutions in charge of accounting for nations' resources often fail to do their part either for fear of punishment or because of their involvement in the underhanded dealings. 'The full costs of the inability of the state due to neo patrimonialism have yet to be fully appreciated' (Hyden et al. 2000:21). Furthermore, Hyden et al. hypothesize that it is one of the most pertinent factors explaining Africa's economic decline and escalating

prevalence of corruption. Neo patrimonialism also gives way to exclusion of social groups so that social processes to participate both in governance and account for the use of the resources are crippled. Neo patrimonialism and particularly the clenching of power in the hands of the ruling clique have alienated the public realm.

‘The story of the public realm in Africa begins with colonization and that the nature of this realm became a major issue primarily as a result of the colonial state’ (Hyden 2000:13). At independence, the nations’ (economic) resources were placed under state control to support the function of the state. There was no room left for the voice of the public on the use of the economic resources of the nation. The reason was primarily that leaders have feared that liberalizing the economy would weaken their control of resources – of which are crucial to their staying in power (op. cit). The most highly disenfranchised in the public realm - concerning participation in governance - have been the rural (poor), women and children. However, Ake (1994) argues that such exclusion to the rural African is hardly a concern, ‘for in that setting, freedom is embedded in the realities of communal life; people worry less about their rights and how to secure them than finding their station and its duties and they see no freedom in rural individualism’ (ibid:5). In addition, the rural African setting is still largely communal, where action is taken for the collective. Rural residents therefore tend to group themselves around traditionally based governance structures. The informal polities that inform the rural dweller are more effective and felt in their day-to-day (communal) lives. ‘In consequence, most people have turned away from the state to seek safety and fulfillment in their community, ethnic group or nation’ (Ake 1994:87). These social formations have however been seen as social formations threatening the state, the result of which has been a further increase in loss of confidence in public institutions as people have experienced the public realm as a very insecure place (Hyden 2000).

It is argued however, that decentralisation can increase efficiency and responsiveness of government (Burki et al. 1992; Maddick 1966). According to this argument, devolving resource allocation decisions to locally elected leaders can improve the match between the mix of services produced by the public sector and the preferences of the local population. Because local officials have better knowledge of local conditions and are more accessible to their constituents, they have the means and the

incentive to be responsive (Burki 1992:3). According to Maddick (1966:25), '...whilst governments will need to retain key functions and responsibilities at the centre, others can only be discharged satisfactorily if the services are taken to the citizen wherever he may be'. Maddick concludes that it is on these counts and on the need for direct contacts with the people that decentralisation has a strong argument if social change is to be produced.

However, Burki (1992:10) points out that the dominant force behind decentralisation is, in the final analysis, political. First, Burki points to the risk that service delivery could decline. Granting political autonomy to local governments does not guarantee an improvement in public services. There is to start with, a risk to be captured by local elites. Transferring decision-making power from central government administrators to local elites may worsen the quality of services, at least for the majority of the constituents. Perhaps the most central issue in shaping both economic and political outcomes of the political reform process is the issue of which groups and individuals will gain control over natural resource wealth (Reed 2001:38). A situation like this can be applied to Lesotho for example, where local chiefs have great decision-making power over both the physical and social environment. In the resource management context, the imbalances in decision-making powers can lead to uneven development and even further poverty for the resource dependent majority.

Much of the development and decentralisation debate has not quite emphasized the issue of control over natural resource wealth. The decentralisation of the state apparatus is essentially an extension of the central states' power over organized spatial units so that both the influence of power and service delivery is immediate and perhaps even more efficient. The transformation of the political apparatus (decentralisation) therefore creates new spatial units, often in the form of districts, councils and municipalities. Mapetla and Rembe (1989:12) indicate that 'local units must have clear and legally recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise authority and within which they perform public functions.' The decentralisation of the central state therefore essentially relates to a hierarchy of power and authority.

2.6. The Eco-politics of development in southern Africa

From the different ideas of development stem different understanding(s) and adaptations of both conservation (ecology) and decentralisation (political transformation). Drawing on governance literature helps towards developing a better understanding of the role of the state as both protector of environmental quality and as promoter of economic development and understanding ways through which the state manipulates and influences the economic and ecological realm.

2.6.1. Ecological decentralisation

Natural resource conservation is underpinned by various philosophical strands. According to Cock and Koch (1991:1), the environment is a political issue. ‘...[T]his perspective views environmental issues as deeply political in the sense that they are embedded in access to power and resources in society...It draws on the ideology of ‘green politics’ to emphasize the importance of linking the struggle against social injustice and the exploitation of people with the struggle against the abuse of the environment.’ On the one hand, in southern Africa, this view has often caused suspicion amongst people about conservation, often associating conservation with relocations and the loss of resource rights. This is perhaps because ‘all too often the demands of the Western conservation ideology conflict with the legitimate needs of usually impoverished rural communities’ (Cock and Koch 1991:213). On the other hand, this ‘progressive, developmental perspective’ as rooted in the ideology of ‘green politics’ means that environmental issues are deeply and fundamentally political.

Brosius and Russell (2003) argue that the emphasis on community, participation, development, and equity is felt to dilute the main goal of conservation initiatives: saving species and habitats. Brosius and Russell assert that there is a fear that conservation is threatened by politically motivated and ‘poorly conceived decentralisation efforts’ (ibid: 41). Based on this view, the formal and spatial models of species populations, their movements, and their ranges have increasingly informed conservation planning as opposed to political decentralisation as based on national resource control (op. cit). The development debate has therefore often identified both

states governance and the preservation of nations' natural resource conservation as important for development.

2.6.2. Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

The demise of the human-nature dialectic has seen the birth of community-based natural resource conservation as an ecologically and socially sustainable way of thinking of the man-nature relations as well as development. As Brosius et al. (1998) indicate, community based natural resource management is viewed differently by different actors. While conservationists' aim is to protect biological diversity with the involvement of local people, development organizations (driven partly by economic and social agenda) aim to promote local participation and populist state agencies overseeing resource management, national and transnational capital. What is common in this multiplicity of CBNRM advocacy is the attempt and/or desire to realize a power sharing relationship that involves the release of power from the state to the local communities. It is based on the power-sharing paradigm that CBNRM can be seen as a form of decentralisation.

Wily (2000) affirmed Brosius et al.'s (1998) view of CBNRM when suggesting that CBNRM is based on two paradigms:

1. One which is founded upon a view of local communities as primary user beneficiaries; and
2. Another which seeks to involve them as actors in management, endowing them with varying degrees of power to determine and regulate the resources themselves. This shift necessitates the release of powers by the state or the central government department overseeing conservation.

The conservation sector through wildlife departments has provided the foundation for community-based natural resource management initiatives giving rise to initiatives such as the communal areas management programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe, Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (ARMADE) in Zambia and conservancies in Namibia and Zimbabwe (Katerere *et al.* 2001:12).

This of course has been based on the paradigm that involves management and the release of power by the state and or the central government department overseeing conservation, as highlighted by Wily above. However, these initiatives also highlight elements of good governance principles.

Good governance is viewed as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable human development. The ability of developing countries to fulfill their development goals is dependent upon the quality of governance. The relationships among the state, private sector and civil society determine whether a nation can create equitable opportunities for its people. Good governance therefore depends on public participation to ensure that political, social and economic priorities based on a broad societal consensus and that the poorest and most vulnerable populations can directly influence political decision-making, particularly with respect to the allocation of development resources (Cheema 2005).

Brosius *et al.* (1998:159) are somewhat skeptical about community-based natural resource management actors (such as NGOs and international funding organizations) however, showing concern about the 'potential political and legal consequences of community-based advocacy programs in which rights to territory, resources, and governance are linked to concepts of ethnicity, space, and indigenous identities'. Brosius *et al.* further indicate that community-based natural resource management movements are sometimes associated with indigenous people's movements and programs and are often linked to proposals for political decentralisation and local autonomy.

Mombeshora (2005:5) argues that despite the weaknesses of CBNRM, integrationist views continue to have a significant bearing on natural resource management policies in the southern African region ... 'in consequence, policies typify power relations.' Furthermore, 'institutions, at various scale levels, namely international, regional, national district and local, shape the ways in which local communities are involved in natural resource management' (ibid:6). This complex institutional maze is perhaps better understood using the concept of geographical decentralisation as presented by Mapetla and Rembe (1989).

Geographical decentralisation involves the delegation of decision-making authority and management for specific functions to organizational parastatals, which are not located within the regular government structure. In such areas, a semi-autonomous authority is created and given responsibility to perform functions. This is common in many developing countries where externally funded projects are given to parastatal bodies to implement...this reluctance is based partly on a lack of confidence in the officials at local levels, and by lack of administrative capabilities to adequately dispense human and financial resources (Mapetla and Rembe:13).

CBNRM initiatives also not only make up (autonomous) political groupings but also because of their space-boundedness, create spatial units. Based on the space boundedness of both natural resource conservation and state decentralization, it becomes important to explore the two development initiatives as they are acted out in the same space. Using the Sehlabathebe National Park area in Lesotho, these concepts are explored, particularly drawing closely to their respective theoretical basis. I introduce the study area in chapter four in which I attempt to draw on some of the ideas of both natural resource conservation and state decentralisation, as they exist in the study area. CBNRM is closely associated with TFCAs in southern Africa.

2.6.3. Trans Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs)

The use of natural resource conservation as a developmental and integration tool in the world and in particular, southern Africa has steadily increased since the birth of the SADC in the 1980s. As Katerere (2001:4) indicates, 'one of the most significant events in natural resource management in southern Africa has been the integration of environmentalism into development policy.' This integrated resource management has often been realized through Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) wherein protected areas have been linked and used in a greater conservation area. Mombeshora (2005:2) indicates that, 'transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM) and nature tourism are good examples of southern Africa attempting to be 'connected' to globalization' (and hence *developed*) because TBNRM calls for greater co-operation and sometimes even sharing between states both nationally and

internationally. This globalization is seen for example in the *Protocol on Wildlife conservation and Law Enforcement in the southern African Community of 1999*⁷.

In the ecological view, TBNRM is the opening up of biological corridors across national boundaries, therefore aiding organic harmony for animals and people. According to Ramutsindela (2004), the use of the concept of TBNRM has been used to describe phenomena that are theoretically the same, these include: transboundary protected areas, peace parks, super parks, transfrontier parks and transfrontier conservation areas.

The decentralisation view of natural resource management is based on the 'uneasy tension that exists between the centralizing tendencies inherent in interstate transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM) agreements and the decentralisation imperative necessary to bring on board, and empower communities in border areas' (Mombeshora 2005:4). This suggests that the establishment of nature reserves and transfrontier conservation areas (parks) for example, are intrinsically politically driven rather than simply ecological processes. 'The seemingly neutral language of 'ecosystems' masks fundamental political and economic interests at play in the exploitation of wildlife resources in (developing countries) Africa as in other places' (op.cit). For example, while the success of TBNRM initiatives are highly reliant on the participation and co-operation of local communities, actors such as NGOs, governments, the private sector and development banks often spearhead TBNRM with the exclusion of local communities.

Using the integrationist view, it is argued that transboundary wildlife management creates democratic spaces for all civil society and greater legitimacy for states. The integrationist view is premised on the harmonization of countries' political, economic and social relations and the historical and cultural ties (Mombeshora 2005; Griffin *et al.* 1999). Mombeshora argues that the integrationist view presents an opportunity to apply the lessons learnt from community-based conservation (CBNRM). Similarly, Brosius and Russell (2003) relate the shifts accompanying the new forms of conservation practice to the failure of bottom up models of conservation and

⁷ (See <http://www.pmg.org.za/docs/2003/appendices/030625wildlifeprotocol.htm>).

accountability. The rise of regional approaches to nature conservation has deemed community based conservation redundant because of the call for enlarging protected areas, and connecting protected areas. There is a clear shift in nature conservation from the local communal scale to the greater regional state. However, unlike the integrationist view as argued by Mombeshora (2005), Brosius and Russell (2003) make sense of the integrationist view in line with land use planning as seen in ecoregional planning, landscape level planning and ecosystem management.

Jones and Chonguica (2001) indicate that in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, the TBNRM dates as far back as 1938 when the colonial administration in Mozambique submitted to a proposal to negotiate the establishment of Transfrontier parks with its neighbor states. Today, amongst the objectives of the TFCAs – which are funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) under the auspices of the World Bank, are to:

- Promote trans-border eco-tourism development as a means for fostering regional socio-economic development; and
- Develop frameworks and strategies whereby local communities can participate in, and tangibly benefit from, the management and sustainable use of natural resources that occur within TFCAs.

In August 1999, the Heads of the 14 member Nations signed a Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement in the Southern African Development Community. One of the objectives of the Protocol is to ‘promote the conservation of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas’, a clear signal to member states that TFCA establishment is now accepted and seen as a priority (Hanks 2003). The idea of TFCAs is a classic example of a pluralist idea of the state, wherein

an area of land and/or sea with one or more borders between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas and/or areas beyond the limit of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity (the bioregionalism approach), and of natural and associated cultural

resources and managed cooperatively through legal and other effective means (Hanks 2003:128).

However, TFCAs threaten state sovereignty in that by mutual protection of part of its territory, it also shares the regulation and control over the given area, giving the state only partial authority over activities in such spaces and often leaving them as spaces of illegal activity. As Wolmer (2005) argues, in this messy real world, the post-national symbolism runs up against divergent visions of reuniting a continent artificially carved up by colonialism (see Draper and Wels 2002, Ramutsindela 2004). This is particularly true of situations where there are differences in the economic power of the partner nation states and their perceived ability to negotiate their interaction. Wolmer (2005:5) also warns that,

as regional planning and investment initiatives span differing institutional frameworks and with varying degrees of collaboration between the state, private sector and civil society they superimpose further layers of politics and raise important questions about power, control, authority, accountability and legitimacy at a variety of scales – that is to say about governance.

Furthermore, TFCAs have also been used as a territorial expansion tool to extend the state's power over both people and wildlife. Similar to the idea of territorial expansion through TFCAs, Duffy (2005) indicates that state building can also be a result of TFCAs. As Duffy (2001:5) puts it: 'The need to extend state control over nature through various forms of environmental management has fed into attempts to increase state influence over border regions and raised the prospect of transboundary state making that would represent a new departure in global politics.'

The conservation of natural resource across national borders therefore politicizes natural resources in that it is acted out in (contested) space, and consequently creates spatial units. Within and around these spatial units often co-exist human inhabitants. In line with the human - centered development approach, local inhabitants' need to be accommodated to co-exist in these often highly contested spaces. This aspect of the human-centered development approach can be attributed to the birth of the community-based natural resource conservation initiative, now very popular in and around resource conservation areas throughout the world.

2.6.4. The MDTP as a Transfrontier Initiative

The Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier project (MDTP) can be seen as a regional approach to conservation and development. The implementation of the initiative comes after a number of years of discussions between Lesotho and South Africa. On the Lesotho side, the conservation area dates as far back as 1966 when The Right Honorable Dr. Leabua Jonathan sought help from his South African counterpart, Dr. Anton Rupert in attempts to alleviate poverty in Lesotho. Dr. Rupert went on to conceive the idea of establishing the Lesotho National Development Cooperation (LNDC) in 1967 as a corporate structure to act on behalf of Basotho producers in the international trading system. Dr. Rupert was later involved in nature conservation through the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) through which ‘...42 national parks and nature reserves were established or enlarged and vast cross-border ‘peace parks’ were created’ – of which the Maloti-Drakensberg is one (Barron 2006). The PPF has therefore been instrumental in the organization and implementation of the MDTP, thus giving Lesotho a longstanding history in regional nature conservation (See Peace Parks Foundation 2000c). Within the MDTP area network of protected areas is the Sehlabathebe National Park (SNP) – see Figure 2.

The SNP area was set aside for development during the time of Prime Minister ship of Chief Leabua Jonathan whose rule in 1970 caused great instability and resulted in a coup. A descendent of the Molapo noble clan, Chief Leabua Jonathan’s party, Basotho National Party (BNP), won the first-past-the-post elections for a parliament and Prime Minister in 1965. The BNP won by a narrow margin over the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP). The position of the Prime Minister in Lesotho represents a shift in governance from clan based autonomy and colonialism to the Westminster – style constitutional monarchy. King Moshoeshoe II made a vain effort to be more than a figurehead constitutional monarch, but was defeated in his attempt to rally traditionalist Basotho (Gay and Green 2001). Furthermore, following its election victory, the BNP, led by Leabua Jonathan, consolidated its power by constraining the overriding powers of the monarch, successfully sending the king into exile. The new government further downgraded the role of the chiefs and increased its co-operation with South Africa (Gumbi 1995).

In 1970, the opposition Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) won the election, but the outgoing Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan, with the support of *apartheid* South Africa, declared the results null and void, and suspended the constitution. He ruled by decree until 1986, though nominally through a parliament consisting solely of loyal party members and a few co-opted opposition voices. All decisions for the nation were made within the upper ranks of the BNP. Opposition figures were repressed, jailed, beaten, exiled, and even killed; while at the same time, the formalities of parliamentary rule were given nominal recognition (Gay and Green 2001). The result of the 1970 coup has had far reaching and still visible, effects on the political trends as well as social relations based on political affiliation in Lesotho. In accord, Matlosa and Sello (2004) have indicated that 'the history of political parties in Lesotho is one of schisms. Many of the parties currently in existence trace their roots back to other parties that are still operational.' The long-standing divisions in the political environment of Lesotho and particularly Sehlabathebe are played out in different ways in the country today – affecting not only the political arena but also the natural environment and related activities therein.

Unlike many TFCAs, the Maloti-Drakensberg initiative incorporates a number of protected areas (see Figure 2). On the Lesotho side, the initiative incorporates protected areas and a considerable area of communal grazing land (see Figure 1).

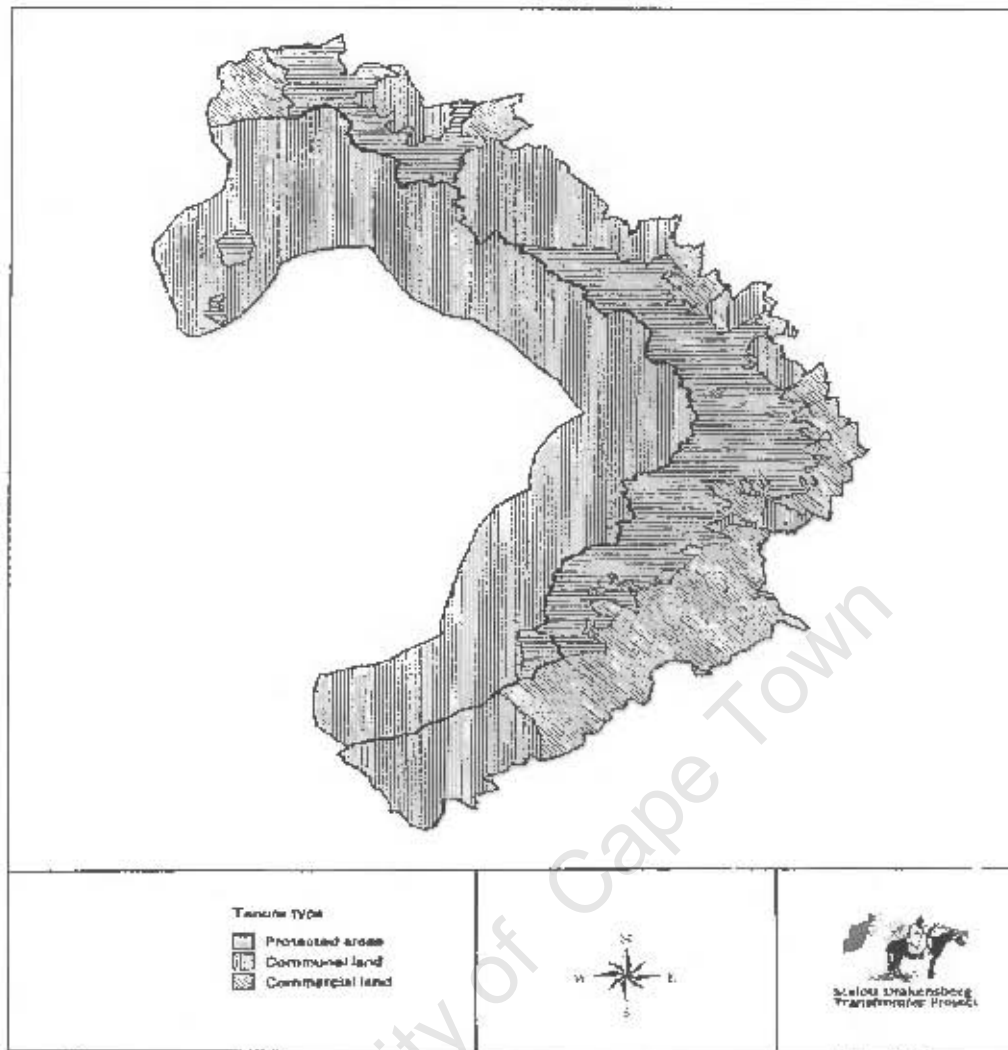


Figure 1 Land use types in MDTP area. Source: MDTP (2005).

Lying along an alpine and montane zone, the MDTP is home to globally significant biodiversity with high degrees of endemism and an impressive gallery of rock art. The main objective of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as the funder of the MDTP is to conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the area and to contribute to community development through income generation from nature-based tourism by sustainable utilization of the project area (Jones and Chonguica 2001; MDTP 2005).

In September 1998, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Lesotho government and the KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation Board. A bilateral steering committee was later established to guide the implementation of the project – working with groups and a variety of other coordination and communication activities (MDTP 2005). Amongst the project activities in Lesotho is the aim to build on the country's experience of managing range management areas and Grazing Associations

in order to limit overgrazing and to offer alternative sources of livelihood through nature based tourism in the project area. The project offers significant promise in economic benefits through tourism. Ecologically, the project is aimed at overseeing conservation in the Maloti Drakensberg ecosystem with the support of range management areas and protected areas surrounding the project area. Furthermore, '[I]n Lesotho significant support has been given to developing the Schlabathebe National Park (SNP), including provision of infrastructure, staffing, training and support for park management' (Jones and Chonguica 2001:16).

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Definitions and Key Research Variables

3.1.1. Secondary sources

Secondary sources were used to understand the differences in ideas behind the decentralisation of the state and natural resource management. Secondary documents provide a conceptual background of the study. Using newspapers, policy documents and reports from the respective government ministries, the MDTP and other conservation institutions, not only clarifies differences in understanding as to what community development is, but also on how such thinking differs between the MDTP as overseer of natural resource development and the Lesotho government as state institution. The differences in understanding community development and praxis of these two groups were at the core of this study. Clark and Hogart et al. (as cited in Wilshusen et al. 2003:23) have shown however that 'secondary data are recognized in terms of representing the priorities of its creators (typically bureaucrats) and thus comprising socially constructed questions which are not necessarily directly relevant to the research'. Above all, secondary documents are particularly useful as they are the basis upon which ideology is understood and adopted in this research.

3.1.2. Primary sources

3.1.2.1. Local Sehlabathebe residents

The Sehlabathebe sample population was initially divided into two groups: Pre 1970 residents being those residents and users of the park prior to and until 1970; and recent users being those using the park for the past five years. The rationale for this division was that park area users in the pre 1970 group would inform the study on how the land was used prior to the area's declaration as a national park and role of governance therein. I had envisaged also that the data generated around the use of the land prior to 1970 would perhaps even shed light on the reasons why the area was

declared a national park. However, I was able to talk to only two respondents who had been in the park prior to its declaration as a National Park in 1970. Many of the other respondents indicated that they had heard of their parents (now deceased) using the park area as a range management area pre 1970.

Recent users in the last five years were useful in generating data on the governance of the park area and the changes that have been brought about by the work of the MDTP. Going into the field, I had not expected much of the data to be generated around the work of the new local government councils, as these structures are not yet operational in their respective areas. However, in many villages I found that local councilors were already working actively and their roles as councilors were well known by the community.

Following the work of the MDTP in the area alongside the projects' aims, I have been able to compare the aims and proposed activity of the local government councils to illustrate differences in facilitating community participation and development by the conservation and local government bodies acting in the area.

3.2.1.2. Central Government and Conservation institutions in Lesotho

The state is perceived as all those arms of the central government that are directly involved in the implementation of decentralisation (local government). In Lesotho, the Ministry of Local Government has been the most active and prominent player in overseeing the decentralisation process, thus making the ministry of Local Government one unit of analysis in the central government strata. There are several ministries of Government that are involved in conservation, such as, the Ministries of Land Use Planning, Forestry and Environment and Gender and Youth Affairs. Included in this stratum were the chiefs in the study area.

The MDTP is the main player in conservation and takes the leading role in developmental efforts in conservation and resource management. It involves conservation bodies such as the Peace Parks foundation, the IUCN and research consultants in conservation around Sehlabathebe. These bodies make up another stratum in the data gathering exercise. Contrary to the initial plan, I was unable to interview representatives from both the PPF (Peace Parks Foundation) and the IUCN

(World Conservation Union). Interviewing representatives from the MDTP has set the research process in context and the data has been used to analyse the objectives and plans for conservation in the study area.

3.2. Issues of Measurement

The research was not conducted within the park area itself, as there are no people residing in the park. The nine selected villages (Ha Mavuuka, Semenyane, Sephelane, Edward, Moshebi, Sehlabathebe, Thamathu, Belebesi, and Mpharane), are amongst the 24 that make up the Khomo Phatsoa Council area in Sehlabathebe. The selection of the nine villages was based on their distance from the park as these villages were all neighboring the park. According to the Community Council Action Plan, the total population of the council area in 2005 was 6341. A total number of 136 households were visited with one respondent interviewed per household (see Table 1).

Village Name	Village Proximity to SNP (in Km)	Number of People Interviewed
Ha Mavuuka	9	17
Semenyane	11	10
Sephelane	13.5	9
Edward	10.5	19
Moshebi	14	18
Sehlabathebe	9	18
Thamathu	7	22
Belebesi	8.5	15
Mpharane	11	8
TOTAL		136

Table 1 The number of households interviewed per village in Sehlabathebe and their proximity to SNP. Source: Author.

Of the 136 people were interviewed, 63 percent of the heads of household were men. However, in many of the households, especially where the head of household was not present at the time of interview, the women did not mention themselves as heads of household, despite either the fact that their husbands were remarried or permanently living away from their households.

The levels of education amongst the heads of households tended to be higher among men than women – with only 8 per cent of women educated up to primary school level. The majority of the households had an average of 5 children and almost all of the ones over the age of 6 were in school. It is in very few cases that we find children herding animals instead of going to school, for instance. What is peculiar however is that in most of the cases where children of school going age are herding animals, they are hired to do so and are not children of a household that they work for

Although the villages were selected because of their proximity to the park, the main reasons for their inclusion were that:

1. They are represented in the SNP (Sehlabathebe National Park) management and planning committee and in the work that the MDTP does in the area; and
2. Some of the residents in the selected villages have been living in their village before and since 1970 – when the park was established, making them a useful source for comparison with recent villagers.

Using the stratified sampling method, 136 respondents were interviewed to make up the sample population for the study. Using the stratified sampling method, the population is organized into homogeneous subsets within which a random sample is selected. The population is generated from the following strata: secondary documents, local (Sehlabathebe) community, (Central) Government, and conservation bodies. The stratified sampling method is preferred because as Babbie and Mouton (2001:191) indicate, it is a method for obtaining a greater degree of representativeness - decreasing the probable sampling error and organizing the population into homogeneous subsets - with heterogeneity between subsets (ibid). It has been especially important to minimize the sampling error because the total research population is relatively small, while at the same time, requiring representativity.

Given the time and financial constraints, the sample was based primarily on the availability of respondents to take part in the research and their willingness to participate. Although this was particularly anticipated in the case of participating Ministry and the conservation officials, it turned out to be the case also with respondents in the various villages in Sehlabathebe. Many of the respondents were not

available for interview as they were mostly in the fields tilling their crops in anticipation of the summer season.

Throughout the study, I have had access to computing and library services through the University of Cape Town and it is there that I have accessed many of the official documents of both the Lesotho government and those of the involved conservation institutions. As the official documents found via Internet and the library were however not exhaustive, therefore further collection and analysis of data was done in the respective institutions' offices during fieldwork. The MDTP and the Ministry of Parks offices were particularly forthcoming with official documents, some of which I would have otherwise been unable to get access to.

An initial field visit in July 2005 made the selection of these villages feasible. In addition to selecting the site, the preliminary visit was useful in identifying key informants and making field observations. Field observation in this case was particularly important and useful towards providing background information on the area. However, the last population census conducted in Lesotho was in 1996. I had hoped to mediate this shortcoming by using data gathered by either the MDTP or other ministries, which have been involved in planning projects in the area but the statistical data available on the area was not extensive. However, using the socio-economic characteristics of the area collected using a survey questionnaire; I have attempted to use my field observations to give a clear and unbiased account on the background information of the research area. The research also made use of telephonic and e-mail interviews, particularly to follow-up on gaps in the data.

3.3. Sample design and sampling methods

The study made use of four different research instruments. There was however, a recurring theme in all of the instruments used – community needs and the responses to those needs - so as not to lose sight of the research objectives and to facilitate the analysis of data. Because the interviewing in Sehlabathebe by my research assistants and me was done mostly in Sesotho, we had to translate the questionnaire together and agree on the preferred way of asking the questions. This exercise was done over three meetings prior to the fieldwork exercise. The research instruments used in the study are attached in Appendix 1.

3.3.1. The Survey Questionnaire

The respondents in the villages of Sehlabathebe were interrogated by use of a survey questionnaire, which was a mixture of both open ended and closed questions. Having earmarked key research participants during the preliminary field visit in July 2005, a tentative short list of key respondents was drawn before the actual fieldwork. The list although somewhat unclear at the time, earmarked individuals that were representatives of their respective villages in the park committee. The list was later used in the actual fieldwork in November 2005 and it aided the snowball sampling method that I used particularly to get access to respondents that were representatives in the various committees represented in the steering committee and those that had lived in the neighboring villages prior to the park's beginning in 1970. The snowball sampling procedure is implemented by collecting data on the few members of the target population that can be located and asking those individuals to provide information needed to trace other members of that population whom they happen to know (Babbie and Mouton 2001:167). Although the procedure also results in samples with questionable representativeness (*ibid*), it is best suited for this target population, particularly old users, some of which may have migrated because of the park establishment or other reasons. Locating such individuals is important even if they are not available for interviewing, because it gives an indication of both the land use and population dynamics in the area of the given time period.

Questionnaires were the preferred method of investigation because I needed to have questions prepared in advance and respondents were interviewed because the physical reaction of the respondents is as important as their verbal responses. Also, as Babbie and Mouton (2001:249) indicate, due mainly to the relatively low level of literacy of the South African (similar to the case of rural Lesotho) population, face-to-face interviews are the most common method to collect data. The interviews with the residents of Sehlabathebe were conducted in a relaxed manner and respondents were allowed to ask questions to seek clarification or the purpose of the questions asked. It was important to ensure that all relevant questions have been posed and satisfactory responses obtained (Kalabamu 2003:12). This semi-structured interview method minimizes the risk of respondents responding on a tangent to the question. The semi-structured interviews were accompanied by critical observations on family/or

household structure, available facilities and informal economic activities on the plot or in the area. Interviews with the local community members is necessary because they are the unit that is being acted upon by both government and conservation practice to realize community participation and therefore development.

3.3.2. The Interview Schedule

3.3.2.1. Ministerial Interviews

All of the respondents from the Government ministries and the conservation body (MDTP) were interviewed using an interview schedule. These included interviews at the MDTP offices in Maseru; the Ministry of Parks; Ministry of Environment; the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); and, the ministry of Gender.

The questions asked sought to explore and describe the respective aims and activities of these institutions towards community participation and therefore development. Such questions have been used in the report for comparative purposes to assess differences in ideas of development and how it is best achieved. The information generated from the interviews was 'necessary for understanding the legal and institutional aspects' of the rationale for decentralisation in development (Kunkwenzu and Binauli 2003:9). Attached in Appendix 4 is an itinerary of persons met at various stages of the study.

3.3.2.2. Chief Interviews

Interviews were successfully conducted with the chiefs in the villages visited. However, in the village of Sehlabathebe, the village chief was not available for interview and arrangements were made to interview his right hand man in his place.

The chiefs' interview schedule included questions on the roles of the chiefs in the village and the roles that they play in the development project. It was important to hear the chiefs' views of their personal roles. In addition, the questionnaire sought the views of the chiefs about their roles in the presence of local councilors and whether the presence of the councilors would possibly change their standing in their communities.

Lastly, the chiefs were asked to comment on the MDTP and the SNP. This question was useful in not only getting the views of the chief about the developments taking place in nature conservation, but also to probe whether some chiefs were able to draw a distinction between the work of the MDTP and the SNP.

3.3.2.3. Councilor and Steering Committee Interviews

Both steering committee representatives and councilors were interviewed by use of the same research instrument. The committee is made up of nine people, each representative of an existing society in Sehlabathebe. The societies that they represent work closely with the MDTP in overseeing community involvement in the various plans of the MDTP. The societies include amongst others, handicrafts; herd boys; village health workers; range management and natural resource conservation. The questions asked included questioning on the representatives' roles as individuals and as committees in the community. Also interrogated was the participation of community members in the work of the committees. This question was important, as it is an evaluation of the community participation and how open these committees are to the participation of the community at large.

Lastly, both the steering committee and the local councilors are the mouthpiece of the people and more importantly, the executors of development plans. Therefore, it was important to establish the committees and councilors access to resources, how the resources were being used and how decisions were being arrived at on implementing plans agreed upon in consultation with the community members.

3.4. Data capturing and representation

Following the fieldwork in November and December 2005, the interviews with the individual participants were transcribed where necessary and analyzed using the Nvivo software. Nvivo is the preferred method for coding the interviews because 'each incident in the data is coded into as many categories as possible, in the language of the participants' (Fielding and Lee 1998:38). Using the grounded theory approach, the categories generated - through what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as open coding - were then defined, and formulated into a smaller set of higher-level

concepts, which the program calls the nodes. Questions with quantitative responses, particularly those with the Sehlabathebe respondents were however analyzed using SPSS software. Using the study sample of 136 interviews as the unit sample, the study deployed frequencies, percentages and cross tabulations statistically to describe the results from the study.

3.5. Limitations of the study

All qualitative methods recognize the relevance and importance of 'lay' or 'folk' perspectives on the practicalities of everyday life.

We choose these methods, then, as a way of challenging the way the world is structured, the way that knowledge is made, from the top to down. We are therefore adopting a strategy that recognizes the diversity of human experience, that addresses the complexity of how lives are lived, and that confronts the fact that people's characteristics and experiences do not group into neat mappable parcels or tidy policy-relevant units (Smith 2001:23).

Having acknowledged even those things that we do not have control over as researchers, it is our responsibility to seek ways to minimizing the impact of external factors on our respective research studies. The following are limitations of the study and the attempts made in the study to avoid or at least minimized them.

3.5.1. Qualitative research design

Due to time and resource constraints, the number of cases in the research was not as large as had been envisaged. Because many of the villages of Sehlabathebe are so small (often averaging not more than 30 households per village), I had hoped to make visits to as many households as possible. Because this form of study involves participation and involvement on the part of subjects, which enhances chances of high construct validity, low refusal rates and 'ownership' of findings (Babbie and Mouton 2001:151). Babbie and Mouton warn therefore that the small number of cases and low degree of control affect overall generalisability and possibility of strong causal and structural explanations.

3.5.2. Ethics

In human Geography as elsewhere in the humanities and social sciences, the crisis of representation has caused considerable intellectual handwringing (Duncan and Ley, in Limb and Dwyer (2001). First, to what extent is interpretation of the 'other' an act of social and cultural privilege, and as such an exercise in unequal relations to power? The researcher is typically articulate, well educated and socially and economically privileged, able to reach and influence a like-minded audience. The story the researcher tells becomes part of a pool of shared knowledge and that knowledge can itself influence the actions of privileged groups towards people in more marginalized settings. This anxiety has raised the question of whether interpretation of the 'other' is ethically defensible, and under what circumstances it could be so (Ley and Mountz 2001).

It had been expected that the majority of the respondents in Sehlabathebe would be male, have no formal education and somewhat marginalized although I found that more of the respondents were actually female. It was critical to take into account the gender, educational and social dynamics of the respondents, and how these affect the dynamics of their relationship with the researcher. I had expected that complicating this relationship further would be the fact that I, as a researcher, am young and female. However, the situation in the field was not as complicated as I had thought, although there were a few respondents who did not respond very well to myself and my two other female research assistants. I am however, not attributing their poor responses to the fact that we were female though this is definitely not overlooked.

Explaining to the respondents the aims of the research and why their input is critical is one way in which my research respondents and I hoped to minimize marginalization. In addition, an exchange of the research, its aims, and its value to the lives of the people and to their physical environment proved useful in that it opened up conversation around respondents' understanding of these issues and with anticipation, minimized a bias interpretation and the 'other'-ing of the respondents. Notwithstanding the attempts to explain the research to respondents, many respondents still assumed that we were there to offer employment opportunities to the members of the community.

3.5.3. Gaining Access

During the preliminary visit in July 2005, the paramount chief at Ha Mavuuka granted me access to the relevant villages. However, upon our arrival in the study area for the actual fieldwork in November, we again sought the paramount chief's permission and he in turn gave us a letter, which we presented to the village chiefs visited throughout the time of the fieldwork. As Hammersley and Atkison, (cited in Neuman 1997:351) indicate: 'Even the most friendly and co-operative gatekeepers or sponsors will shape the conduct and development of research. To one degree or another, the [ethnographer] or researcher will be channeled in line with existing networks of friendship and enmity, territory, and equivalent boundaries'. The letter from the paramount chief was therefore useful in avoiding resentment from gatekeepers in the different villages.

'Entering a field site requires having a flexible strategy or plan of action, negotiating access and relations with members, and deciding how much to disclose about the research to field members or gatekeepers' (Neuman 1997:352). It was crucial that I considered these gatekeepers. I therefore scheduled a lapse time of one week in my project time as time for negotiations in case initial access was denied. Fortunately, all of the chiefs and respondents were very co-operative and the set fieldwork time did not need to be adjusted.

However, securing interview times with many of the representatives at the MDTP and in the government ministries was very difficult and in the end, I was forced to email the questionnaire to the respondents for them to fill it in at their convenient time. I have been able to communicate further with some of them and, where there has been a need to clarify some points, I have been able to get clarification with timeous reply.

3.5.4. Time and Resources

As had been anticipated, the fieldwork process spanned four months from November 2005 to the end of February 2006. This time proved to be sufficient for data collection and initial data analysis so that if necessary, subsequent field visits could be arranged. A shortage in resources could have delayed the initiation of the fieldwork process and possibly compromised subsequent activities but with funding towards the fieldwork

from the National Research Foundation (NRF), I had enough financial resources to sustain myself and my three fieldwork assistants throughout the data collection process. However, given that there were still so many households that we had been unable to visit, with more resources, I would have liked to revisit the research site and interview more households.

Initially I had hoped that maps could also be used to highlight changes in constituency boundaries, particularly before the park was declared a conservation area in 1970 and present government drawn boundaries and those boundaries that the MDTP work within. By superimposing these maps, the boundary making could be highlighted and incorporated into the discussion around ideological differences in boundaries to highlight the manifestation of the differing ideology as played out in the same space. However, I was unable to access the relevant maps to map the changes in land use since 1970 to present primarily because of time constraints.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. SEHLABATHEBE: THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyze and interpret data collected in the research at Sehlabathebe during fieldwork. The findings discussed in this chapter are in the context of the aims of the study as outlined in chapter one of this thesis.

4.2. Overview of the ecology of Sehlabathebe

According to Chakela (1999), 'Lesotho comprises six ecological regions: the lowlands (21.25 percent of the total land area), the foothills (11.76 percent), the Senqu valley (21.83 percent), the upper mountain valleys (21.83 percent), the mountain region (12.86 percent) and the high mountain region (16.55 percent). The distribution of these regions is illustrated in the Figure 3. The study was conducted in the Qacha's Nek district of Lesotho, which falls in the mountain ecological region.

The overall climate in Lesotho is temperate but varies spatially and temporally. Rainfall is concentrated in the summer months between October and March, with the mountains receiving more than any of the other regions. Temperatures vary considerably between seasons, and freezing temperatures occur in the winter months (between May and August) at higher elevations, often limiting plant growth in the region (Letsela et al. 2003, Chakela 1999).

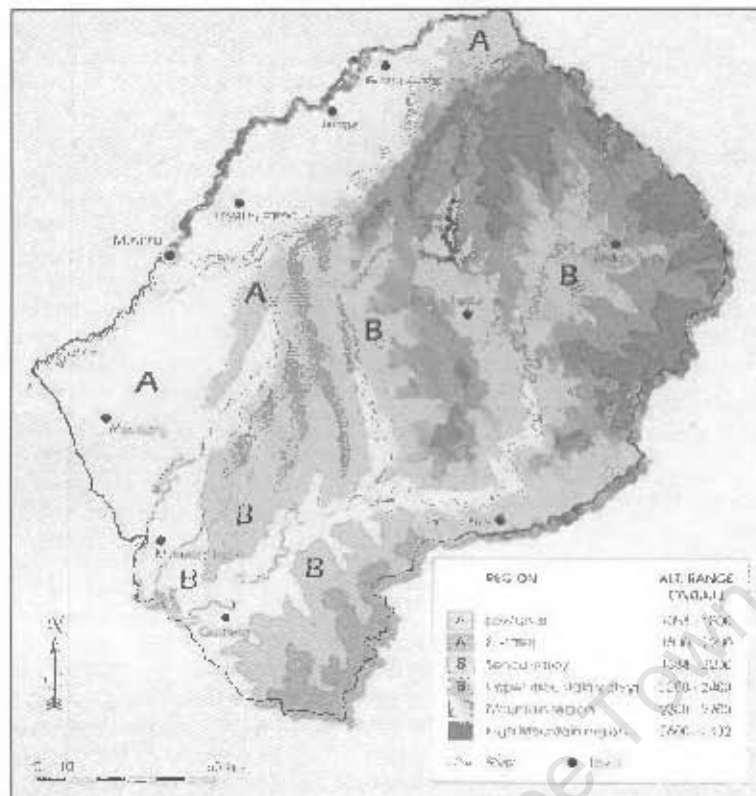


Figure 3 Ecological zones of Lesotho. Source: Chakela 1997.

The (research area) Sehlabathebe National Park straddles along the Maloti-Drakensberg mountain range covering 6,500ha area of land with the uKhahlamba National Park sharing borders with it on the South African side (as shown in Fig. 2). According to the MDTP Newsletter (2005), the two parks lie side by side for an estimated 12km of the international boundary area. The area contains a wealth of ecological value, primarily in vegetation cover which is important for catchment cover and wetlands as water sources in the region. The area is also home to rare vegetation and bird life. For example there is the *Aponogeton ranunculiflorus*, a water flower endemic to the high tarns found in the Sehlabathebe National park; and Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*) which has been classified as endangered in the Red data book for South Africa (MDTP 2005). The area therefore requires sustainable utilization and maintenance models of resources in the area. The MDTP is conducting training, awareness, campaigns, and study tours on biodiversity threats and environmental protection, particularly to herders as they spend a lot of time in these areas. This is in line with Lesotho's National Environmental Policy (NEP) 1994 section 4.27 on Public Participation whose objectives are:

1. To raise public awareness and promote understanding of the essential linkages between environment and development; and
2. To encourage individual and community participation in improving their own lives and environment through development and other activities.

The strategies proposed in meeting the above-mentioned objectives are to:

1. Re-orient and train extension officers in all line ministries as well influence all donor agencies and NGOs, to facilitate community participation in natural resource management and development programmes;
2. Return a significant portion of the benefits accruing from sustainable utilization of natural resources on public and customary lands, for example, from tourism, to the local communities, whose collaboration is required to conserve the resources, for development activities, that is, improved social services; and to
3. Empower local communities by participating in decision-making process through their elected representatives, and/or through *pitsos*.

Furthermore, the MDTP is proposing a benefit-based concept for conservation wherein those who maintain the integrity of the environment should derive partial revenues generated from those using the area (MDTP 2005). There is a clear commitment on the part of the MDTP to oversee the natural resources of ecological value in the project area. However, '...there was recognition of the imperative for the Government of Lesotho to set up a national body responsible for overall coordination of environmental matters nationwide, and to put in place an enabling legal framework to facilitate this coordination to address environmental challenges' (NEP 1994:1).

4.3. Socio-political conditions

The Qacha's Nek district in which SNP is located as known as the stronghold of the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party under Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili. Khomo Phatsoa community council area is one of the 11 constituency areas in that district. At least a third of the seats in each kind of council are reserved for women and in the Khomo Phatsoa community council, five of the

nine community councilors are women. The Khomo Phatsoa council area houses 24 villages and this group of villages is commonly referred to as Schlabathebe. One of the villages in the council area is also referred to as Schlabathebe; the village is however also called Lebenkeleng. For the purposes of this discussion Schlabathebe village is referred to as such while the nine research villages will be referred to as Schlabathebe.

Many of the respondents indicated that they are not formally employed, with 11 per cent of the heads of households being formally employed. Of the 11 per cent, the majority were men, generating incomes from farming and less than 1 per cent receiving incomes from mine remittances (see Table 2).

Category	Indicator	% of households
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	1-3 Members	16
	4-6 Members	42
	>6 Members	42
EDUCATION	No formal education	24
	Primary Education	55
	Secondary Education	8
	High school education	6.5
	Higher	0.8
EMPLOYMENT	Head of household	10.6
	Spouse	5
INFORMAL INCOME SOURCES	Farming (Subsistence)	9
	Self employment	2.5
	Remittances	0.6

Table 2 The socio-economic status of households in Schlabathebe (N=136). Source: Author.

Although 9 per cent of the respondents mentioned farming as a source of income, almost every household in the villages visited was farming although with the sole-purpose of generating an income from their produce. As shown in Figure 4, the incidence of respondents who owned agricultural fields is high, relative to either using the fields communally or not having them at all. The high incidence of agricultural

field ownership can perhaps be traced back to the Lesotho Land Act of 1979 which states:

In rural areas, (the Act) provides for a 'grant of title' to be made to a legal person or an individual. This entitles the allottee to use and occupy the land but not to transfer it. A legal person may hold the allocation for an indefinite period but an individual may only obtain a life interest. The Act provides that the life interest will, on the death of the allottee, pass first to the widow and then to the person designated by the deceased allottee, then to the heir nominated by surviving members of the family (Qhobela 2001:3).

The likelihood that an individual can own a piece of land is supported by the Land Act, which stipulates that land in Lesotho is absolutely and irrevocably vested in the Basotho Nation and no person, other than the Head of State may hold any title to land except as provided by customary law or under the Act (ibid), thus legally entitling every Mosotho national to a parcel of land.

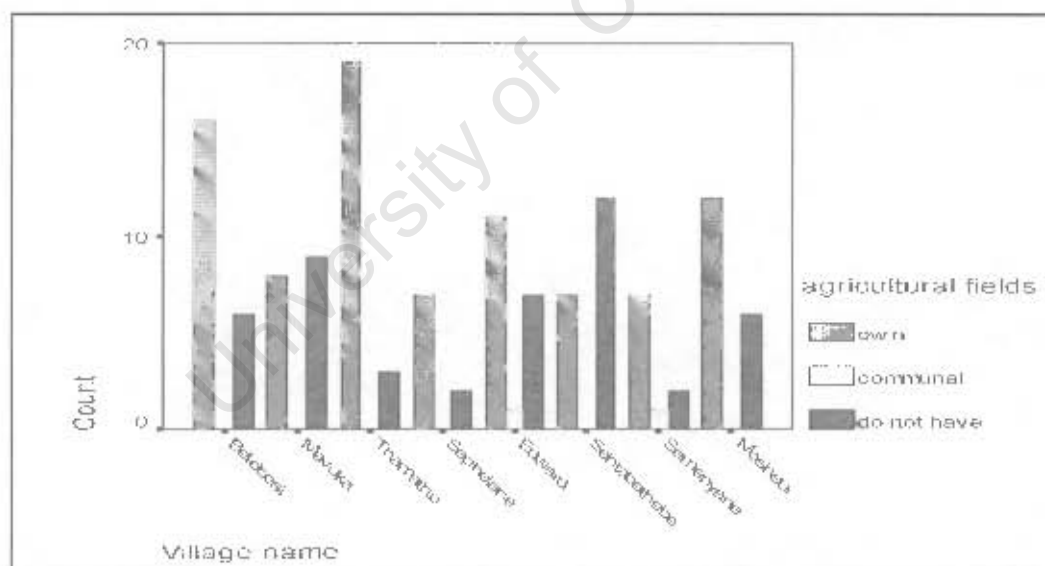


Figure 4 Agricultural field ownership in the Sehlabathebe. Source: Author.

4.4. Development efforts in Sehlabathebe

There is an indication of an increase of social actors in the development process in Sehlabathebe. For example, the role of service delivery has moved from being almost solely a central government task to a more diversified endeavor. Whereas in the past the protection of wild animals and vegetation was overseen by the Ministry of

Environment and its representative arms in the various districts of Lesotho, today the task of resource management is shared by the ministry with the park, herd boys, grazing and conservation as well as the land and natural resources committees which make up the society component in this multi-faceted decentralized service delivery process. Two factors can perhaps be attributed to this in Sehlabathebe:

1. Politically this can be seen as Lesotho's attempt at true decentralisation wherein the state is sharing responsibility over natural resources with its local citizens; and
2. Ecologically, it can be seen as aligned to the idea that human beings (in their different social groupings) are an integral part of ecosystem management and therefore this diversity needs to be reflected in the management of natural resources.

Also involved in the protection of natural resources in Sehlabathebe are the MDTP and the GTZ whose roles can perhaps be seen as representative of the private sector (because they are not government institutions) and various other ministries in central government such as the Ministries of Natural Resources, the Land Use planning division and the Ministry of Agriculture, Co-operatives, Marketing and Youth Affairs. While the above mentioned are not the only stakeholders and actors involved in resource protection, they are representative of the diverse mix of players in the developmental attempt and perhaps even Lesotho's efforts to decentralize service provision to its population.

There seems to be coherence in the varying roles of the actors in natural resource protection in Sehlabathebe. This coherence could be attributed to the work of the MDTP as central coordinating body. For example, as Turner (2005:21) indicates, 'the MDTP and the Range Management Division (RMD) have been working with local communities to convert the existing Grazing areas into Environmental Resource Management Associations (ERMA), and to establish a new ERMA in the Matebeng area whose stock owners have long been in conflict with those of Sehlabathebe over use of grazing in the upper Leqooa valley' (part of the Sehlabathebe RMA).

However, as Rahnema (1997) argues, in using ecological conservation as a tool of overcoming development crises such as poverty and livelihood sustenance, the issue is not that development strategies should be planned or implemented better. It is rather that development should not be imposed on the 'target population' and rather meets the needs and aspirations of the people.

In the case of rural Lesotho and perhaps in Sehlabathebe in particular, it is important that there be a clear or close match between the plans of the Lesotho government, the MDTP and the needs of the people of Sehlabathebe if real development is to be realized and the country's Vision 2020 fulfilled.

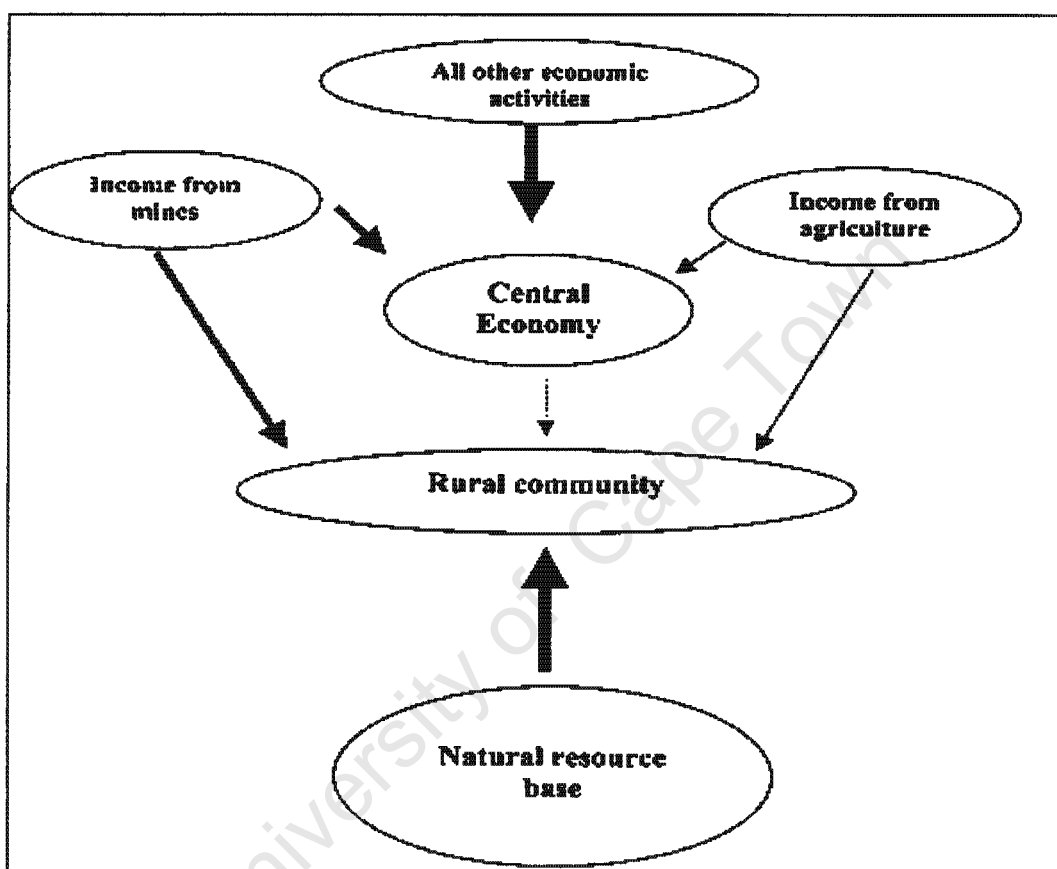
4.4.1. Development and Economic growth in Sehlabathebe

In order to fully appreciate the country's desire to improve the welfare and livelihoods of its citizens, it is important to understand both the social and economic structures in Lesotho.

For a long time, Lesotho has been highly dependant on migrant labor and until 1990 an estimated 125,000 Basotho worked in the South African mines and in turn generated remittances, which made up almost half of the country's Gross National Income (GNI). Figure 5 illustrates sources of income to rural communities where remittances from mines derive a greater income for rural households than agriculture. However, the number of Basotho in the South African mining industry has since been estimated to decline by over half and has had a serious impact on the country's GNI (Dzimba and Matooane 2005). 'According to a 2001 Lesotho Demographic survey, 14 per cent of males and 4 per cent of females over the age of 15 work in South Africa...The disadvantage of these people working in South Africa today is that, unlike mineworkers, there are no remittances' (ibid:14). Lesotho is therefore not only suffering from a high rate of labor and brain drain but it is also no longer getting income from those of its citizens working in South Africa.

Dzimba and Matooane (2005) indicate that the private sector has been able to stimulate to an extent the country's economic growth by expanding employment through industries, and in particular the garment sector. The authors indicate that

although some families have been able to get employment in these industries, the rate of unemployment has far exceeded that of employment in the industries. Unfortunately, however, many of these industries have failed to reach many of the populations of remote Lesotho (as mostly based in Maseru), as they are very far and expensive to reach for many.



The differences in the thickness indicate the marginal differences between the various livelihood sources.

Figure 5 Economic and natural resources interface in rural Lesotho. Source: Letsela et al. (2003:637).

Many people in the rural areas of Lesotho have continued to rely on agriculture and in particular, livestock farming. Livestock in many parts of the country continue to be used in exchange for hard cash. For example, in some parts of rural Lesotho, families still rely on livestock to pay their children's school fees, to pay for initiation schools and in paying *lobola* (bride price). During data collection in Sehlabathebe for instance, a respondent indicated that as a penalty for animals trespassing in the SNP, a number of sheep could be paid as stipulated by the park management. Many livestock

owners were not willing to sell their animals, particularly sheep but would reluctantly agree to negotiations for amounts varying between M400⁸ and M600 for a head of sheep. Livestock therefore remains a symbol of wealth in the rural Lesotho. However, with problems such as stock theft and the close correlation between poverty and the absence of waged income and employment income (Dzimba and Matooane 2005), many rural families continue to struggle to survive.

In response to the issues relating to Lesotho's economic situation, the MDTP has eight components, amongst which are:

1. *Community involvement* for capacity building, training and promotion of ownership of conservation initiative by local communities; and
2. *Nature-based tourism* to diversify sources of income for local communities through eco-tourism related initiatives and strengthen business skills at community level.

According to Mr. Lepono the project ecologist of the MDTP in Lesotho (interview January 28, 2006), the project's three immediate priority areas in Sehlabathebe and the proportion of budget resources to which they have been allocated (by percentage of total budget resources) are as follows:

- Infrastructure development including the management plan for SNP, where communities should directly benefit from the Park (40-60 per cent)
- Improve livelihoods through improved livestock and range resources (20-40 per cent); and
- Improve biodiversity and cultural heritage both outside and inside the park (0-20 per cent).

Clearly then, the MDTP hopes that through infrastructure development and community benefits – mainly to be derived from nature tourism in the SNP, there can be some development in Sehlabathebe. This is outlined in component number seven of the MDTP objectives (See <http://www.maloti.org>). At the time of writing, the MDTP had reported on the project progress only up to December 2005. In as far as

⁸ M is the symbol for Maloti. Maloti are the unit of currency in Lesotho and is directly linked to the South African rand. (M1~\$7).

component number seven (nature-based tourism), the following indicators note progress (http://www.maloti.org/ls/progress/Quartely_Report_Dec_2005.pdf):

- At least 200 people employed in local nature-based tourism enterprises by end of year two⁹ and additions of 300 per annum. Nursery output; local tourism plans in community areas finalized;
- At least 100 community entrepreneurs and 10 civil servants trained each year starting in year two;
- A number of kilometers of hiking trails and 4x4 trails installed per annum; and
- At least two village nurseries installed by end of year two, with additions of two every year thereafter.

Of the above-mentioned indicators, respondents made particular reference to village nurseries. Some respondents referred to trees as an indicator of development in their villages. The MDTP was making trees available to the different villages and committees for planting during the time of data collection. In addition, the community council action plan for the Khomo Phatsoa community council named an increase in tree planting in the past five years as an indicator of environmental change.

For example, the herd boys association representative indicated that himself and his colleagues had just planted some trees in a nearby area to the village which was eroded from past tree harvesting. Clearly then, this component is already underway. Similarly, in Mpharane, the handicrafts and support group committee pointed to tree planting – fruit and forest trees, as the first of its four long-term developments. A committee representative further indicated that in the past there was a nursery that she was involved in, in her village, saying that: ‘When we had a nursery they (*the community members*) were highly active because they were getting paid to do work ... even today, in tree planting often the villagers lend a hand by digging holes and with planting the trees.’ She further indicated however that people are no longer being paid for planting the trees and as a result, they were no longer actively involved in tree planting despite the fact that they are getting the trees for free.

⁹ The duration of the project is 5 years (2003-2008) therefore; year 2 in the project life is 2005.

It seems logical that the reason why some people no longer actively participate in tree planting in their villages is that they are not paid to do it. However, it is important to also interrogate tree planting in terms of the needs of the people. The benefit of trees in Sehlabathebe is mainly the wood source and less so for fruit. Because of its cold and dry climate, the Sehlabathebe area is not suitable for fruit farming. Considering the low morale in tree planting and many of the respondents indicated the need for fruit trees in comparison to wood trees, it was important to look at the people's main source(s) of energy in their homes as well as the wood fetching sites that were being used by the different villages.

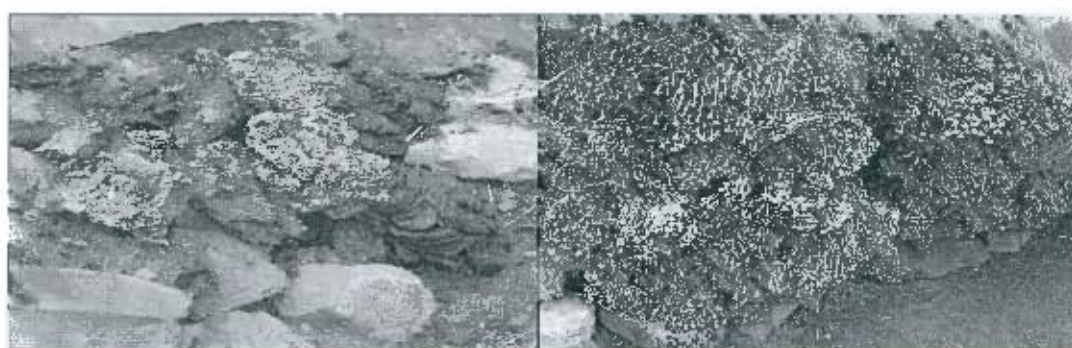


Figure 6 Fuel sources, Lisu (left) and Sehala-hala (right). Source: Author.

84 per cent of the respondents indicated that they use firewood, *lisu*¹⁰ and *sehala-hala*¹¹ (Figure 6) as a source of fuel, particularly for cooking. While 29 per cent of the respondents indicated that, they do not have access to any wood lots and 33 per cent said that they fetch wood on nearby mountains. It was not visible to me that there was enough wood on the mountains that were pointed out as wood fetching sites, especially because these were not forested mountains. Coupled with the fact that wood and energy sources were not named amongst the five most desired needs, the following can be concluded as to why people in the villages of Sehlabathebe have not shown great enthusiasm in tree planting:

1. People have an alternative fuel source to wood, which are the *lisu*. *Lisu* are said to burn longer than wood and are warmer. Also, one does not have to leave the home to get the fuel source, unlike fuel wood which in some

¹⁰ Lisu are dried cattle droppings which are moulded, dried in the sun and stored to be used particularly in the winter season.

¹¹ A small shrub which is harvested while wet and dried before use. Scientific name *Chrysocoma tenuifolia*.

instances has to be fetched very far away from the home and takes a lot of time in the day to collect; and

2. According to the data, there has been an overlap in tree planting schemes in Sehlabathebe. The following committees were actively planting trees at the time of data collection; herd boys, grazing and conservation; and the park committees. It could be that community members have found it difficult to draw distinctions between the different actors in their different villages. Unlike state institutions, village committees do not always have formal legitimacy in the eyes of the people and that could result in rejection.

The respondents do not seem to look at tree planting from the view that the MDTP seems to have had in mind of community ownership of a nursery, which would supply trees and other plants as an income generation method. In fact, in response to a question on their needs according to importance, the respondents indicated hospital services as the most important of the needs in their communities.

In terms of the plans of the MDTP to build nurseries in villages, it would seem that the people are either not aware of the earning potential of having a nursery or that people are simply not interested in this method of generating the community's income. There is a need for conscientisation and education on the possible methods of income generation that are available to the people of Sehlabathebe – of which fruit farming does not seem a very viable option while tree planting for fuel may present a greater earning potential to the people.

Type of desired need	Percentage of respondents	Rank of need according to importance
Hospital	51	1
Better roads	41	2
Water (taps)	18	3
Mortuary	16	4

Table 3 Respondents' needs as ranked by importance. Source: Author.

Also interesting is that of the three highest ranked needs (that is, hospital, better roads and water taps) as illustrated in Table 3, none of them are a way of generating an income. Instead, they are simply welfare services that rather add to the ease of people's lives as opposed to economic standing. The people's desire and need for better roads is clearly pressing. Concern over the state of the roads is further substantiated by the Khomo Phatsoa community council plan, according to which the state of the roads in Sehlabathebe has worsened over the last five years.

Employment or work was mentioned as a need with two per cent of the population naming it amongst their needs. This could suggest that people are more apprehensive about the future of the quality of their lives than generating incomes. The respondents mentioned desired employment as fixing roads and the sale of produce at a market that would ideally be set up in the SNP. The people from the surrounding villages would locally produce the produce sold in the market.

The issue of employment in Sehlabathebe is interesting because it pushes for deeper thought and perhaps understanding of the people's notions of social welfare in comparison to issues such as poverty and natural resource use and conservation. For example, there is a desire expressed by many respondents to have a place at which wool (from villagers' sheep and goats) can be washed, processed and sold to tourists and locals in the park. It is not hard to see a possible match between the people's desire for a wool processing plant and the MDTP plans for tourism as tourism could only mean the expansion of the locals' market for their wool.

The respondents clearly associate employment very closely with agriculture and farming. It is promising that the respondents seem to look at employment from the point of view of self-employment as opposed to formal employment as self-employment allows for greater ownership and control of economic development. Therefore, in line with the MDTP's plan to realize local nature based tourism enterprise, there is a clear match with the people willing and showing a desire to partake in local entrepreneurship (through agriculture and farming). However, the employment issue raises questions, particularly around the work of government in promoting development. In its quest for developments in the Maloti areas, should the

Lesotho government rather place more emphasis on social welfare and meeting basic needs before income generation?

Having noted the enthusiasm and continued popularity of cattle farming among many people in rural Lesotho, and Sehlabathebe in particular, perhaps it would be useful for the MDTP and the Lesotho government alike to look into ways of enhancing economic by improving farming and agricultural based practices. The MDTP has already acknowledged awareness of this as Mr. Lepono of the MDTP, says that the project is actively looking into making the wool cycling project part of its developmental and employment initiatives in Sehlabathebe.

4.4.2. Reducing poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS

There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty. Poverty is also seen as a hindrance to sustainable development. In Lesotho, the harsh climate, poor terrain and poor soils – a result of soil erosion and poor agricultural practice - have rendered agriculture undesirable in many of the country's highland areas (Dzimba and Matooane 2005; Showers 2005). In Sehlabathebe, 53 percent of the respondents indicate that they practice agriculture on their agricultural sites. Coupled with an estimated 116 people receiving food aid per year (GOL 2005), out of a population of 6000341 – it is clear that the levels of poverty in Sehlabathebe are a matter of concern. In many of the villages, this is in the form of vegetable gardens where green vegetables are farmed on a subsistence scale to be consumed by the household while others are part of a network of small vegetable gardeners in the council area of Khomo Phatsoa. The gardens are called horse shoe gardens (see Figure 7) and are supervised by TEBA limited¹², as part of the services provided in the agricultural and livestock sector in the Khomo Phatsoa council area. In my observation, the horse shoe gardens look like an improved method of using compost in agriculture wherein layers of grass, ashes, tin and other waste are sandwiched and topped off with soil in preparation for planting seeds. There is also a watering system used on these plots to

¹² 'TEBA Limited is a service organization primarily responsible for the recruitment of mineworkers for the South African mining industry. In addition, it carries out a vital role in ensuring the payment of various benefits (as well as savings) to workers and their families in rural areas of Southern Africa.' <http://www.teba.co.za/index.asp>

allow water to seep to the bottom of the plots so that not too much water is used for watering.

According to 'Mamorapeli Moteuli, a local councilor of Semenyane (interviewed 18 Nov. 2005), '...Ten people are elected per village for these community gardens ... They are called plots'. 'Maketso Kamoho in Ha Edward, also a horse shoe gardener, indicated that she uses dirty water from her home to water her garden. Essentially then these gardens make water recycling possible. There was a visible presence of the horse shoe gardens in the villages of Edward, Sehlabathebe and Thamathu. According to the respondents, there was training offered to everyone in the community in this form of gardening. Only a few people had taken part in the garden training and in some villages the gardens were communal. The participants in this initiative are taught how to plant crops, when to plant them and which ones are most suitable to the harsh Sehlabathebe climate. Of the participants in the horse shoe gardens, only one has been growing seedlings and selling them to her neighbors. She also has people coming from nearby villages to buy the seedlings to plant in their own vegetable gardens.

While the role and origin of TEBA limited in Sehlabathebe is not very clear, some of the respondents involved in horse shoe gardens indicated that MDTP personnel that have also been running HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in the area had introduced them to the gardening trainers. It can be inferred then that the horse shoe gardens are at least in part an MDTP initiative in the area. It is interesting that all of the participants in the horse shoe gardens that I met were women. While it seemed that others were supporting their families on the horse shoe gardens and others were not doing it very intensively, the future of horse shoe gardening in Sehlabathebe seemed promising. Given the visibly high rate of unemployment (21 per cent) and poverty in the villages visited, the horseshoe gardens could go a long way in improving the lives of people, even if just to provide food for individual families as respondents indicated.



Figure 7 Horse shoe gardens in Sehlabathebe. Source: Author.

In Thamathu, 'Mapalo Mohasi who is also part of the horseshoe gardening project was also spear heading the village's (HIV/AIDS) support group. According to the respondent, the work of the support group is to, '...help people that have returned from hospitalization, especially HIV/AIDS patients but we are not selective as to whom we help. We help them by checking on them in their homes but first we ask permission from their families to help them. We clean their homes; we wash the patients and feed them. We started off helping only AIDS patients but now we help all people.' According to both the respondent in Thamathu and Mrs. Sam of the Health care centre, with financial support from the Lesotho government, support groups are growing in Sehlabathebe and are very effective in helping to lessen the burden on the only clinic in the area at Paulosi.

The support workers as well as Village Health Workers (VHW) are offered training at Machabeng Hospital in Qacha's Nek and trainees are supplied with kits containing cotton wool, disinfectant liquid, toothbrushes and toothpaste, aqueous cream as well as a booklet to keep record of the supplies that are used for every patient.

The role of the support groups and VHW in their respective villages in Sehlabathebe is very important because they not only help home based patients, some are trained as midwives and all of the health workers are also record keepers, documenting births and deaths in their respective villages. As Mrs. Sam mentioned, the call of the local health worker therefore crosses healthcare boundaries because often in emergencies they are the first to be contacted and in the absence of a local councilor, it is them who work hand in hand with the police of the health clinic staff. VHWs have therefore in a sense become the symbol of decentralisation through their work in their villages. In this sense, decentralisation can be seen as the enabling environment that has been afforded to the community members to maintain better health and welfare amongst the people in their villages.

While the number of trained village health workers is on the rise, it is concerning that the hospital in Qacha is increasingly failing to meet the supply kit demand of its health workers. The result has been that there have been many trained health workers but a lot of their work is constrained by the shortage of supplies. It was particularly impressive however that despite this shortage of supplies, more and more people are becoming involved in the health care and help initiative and also that many are sharing their resources (food, water, wood) with the families that they are helping.

The work of the horseshoe gardeners in helping the village's HIV/AIDS support group patients can be seen as a way in which development in one aspect of society can foster development in another. Development in this way then is multi-faceted and inter-linked. More important however is perhaps that the relationship between the horseshoe gardening and the HIV/AIDS support group exemplify the role that social relations play in the development environment. While the support group's development ideology can be seen as health driven, the gardening initiative can be argued to be motivated by subsistence and in a sense making better nutrition available to the populace. Whichever way one looks at these two bodies, their intentions are

clearly linked but it seems that their success has been more in the good working relations than the similarity in their goals. Particularly impressive in this scenario it reflects development at local levels (through village-based committees) and how the activity at the village level ties in with the national goals of both poverty alleviation and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

There is a clear manner of good people-to-people relations in many of the villages. Good people-to-people relations are vital for good governance and democracy (Matooane and Dzimba 2005; Shale 2005; Das 2001). In a place like Sehlabathebe in particular, it seems that good people-to-people relations also aid the fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS because people are more willing to help one another and share the little resources available amongst them. Similarly, in his study on Livelihoods sharing in Lesotho.

Across Lesotho, assistance from kin and neighbors is quoted as a major means of survival for the very poor... Even when close to destitution, Basotho usually retain the social capital to survive ...The result has been that – at least in the rural areas – even the poorest households have some economic assets, and destitution is rare. A strong base of social capital has meant that Basotho share and redistribute what little wealth they have through a variety of mechanisms that combine the economic with the social and cultural (Turner 2005:1).

Another good example of social capital sharing in Sehlabathebe can be seen through the working relations of the horse shoe gardens, support group together with the handicrafts association. Many of the members of the support group in Thamathu village for example are also in the handicrafts association. The handicrafts association is also represented in the SNP committee. According to one member, the handicrafts association serves two purposes to its members and the wider community:

1. The association is a platform (particularly for women) to make artifacts which when sold earn them money to support their families; and
2. The crafts making has become a social event. As one respondent said: ‘I would say that the handicrafts association brings people together. They sit down and do all the things that can be handmade and then be sold to make money and see to it that our children go to school.’

The handicrafts association members make grass baskets, brooms and mats which they sell in their villages as well the neighboring villages. One respondent indicated that when they have accumulated enough crafts, one of the members goes to Qacha's Nek to sell them and the money would be shared amongst the members according to what they have produced and how much of it has been sold. Therefore, amidst the high rate of unemployment in Sehlabathebe, people are clearly making efforts independent of the government to overcome their hardships through community driven initiatives.

While on one hand, the modernist view of development indicates that in order for society to take better advantage of its resources and realize people's social potentials, society needs to be organized. Clearly, this view if applied to the third world context advocates communism but sees the existing communal networks as inefficient (Cole 1999). On the other hand, the political view of development sees social change and progress as necessary towards people with shared interests and by organizing themselves to challenge the relationships of power that obstruct their productive capacity. The shared working relationship of horseshoe gardeners and the support group can therefore be interpreted as an organized response towards poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS treatment.

The socio-economic networking in Sehlabathebe is an important dynamic of development because it illustrates ways in which culture and in this case, a culture of social capital aids development. Although it would seem that the local government structure aids this socio-economic network, the human capital based network still illustrates the paradox in development - that modernization as presented by development (particularly in developing countries) is often thought to conflict with existing and long standing cultural practices; in this case, it is the same cultural practices that are aiding the development process.

4.4.3. Improving service delivery and deepening democracy, peace and stability

The study further interrogates the service delivery, democracy, peace and stability - particularly because they are outlined as areas of development that need improvement by the Lesotho government. In rural Lesotho, the chief oversees all the roles of service delivery (e.g. official letters for the grant of documents such as birth and death certificates or passports), democracy, peace and stability. Until the introduction of local authorities, a great part of rural Lesotho continued to be serviced by the chief, his advisors and the subjects themselves. This is contrary to western democracy according to which these roles would be overseen by the state.

With decentralisation, it is expected that largely state and other social actors play development roles - particularly such as service delivery. For example, service delivery becomes a role to be overseen by the local government, while peace and stability can be seen in many ways as the work of the police and the security forces of a nation which fall largely in the central arm of the government. However, all these roles are steered by the state and as Buscher et al. (2005:5) argue, 'the difficult task for the state then is to find new ways in which many different conjunctions of governance could be stimulated to form some kind of coherent and coordinated system that fulfills the demands and needs of society.'

In the case of Lesotho and Sehlabathebe in particular, the different conjunctions of governance that Buscher et al. refer to about can be seen as the Sehlabathebe steering committee as well as the MDTP and its work with the local Sehlabathebe communities. The exponentially growing actors involved in development therefore infers that power is being shared exponentially and filtered often to areas where it was not previously held. The power division is a reflection of the influence of globalization and localization in the African state. Ultimately, however, decision making still lies with the central state. Drawing on literature on the Westphalian state, Warner (1999) identifies one of the primary state imperatives of the past to have been built on the realization that conflict was often within the state relative to being

between states. Also noted was that frequently these internal conflicts involved natural resources.

The modern (democratic) state has similarly, placed environmental issues at the top of its security agenda (Lowi 1993; Warner 1999). This is particularly the case in developing countries, where natural resources seem to trigger conflict. For example, despite the recent establishment of the Transfrontier project between South Africa and Lesotho, the political relationship between and within the two countries remains tense. Turner (2005) mentions the long-standing conflict between stockowners in the Matebeng and Sehlabathebe over grazing areas. Similarly, Hone (1995) and Kiepiel and Quinlan, 1999 (in Manor 1999:164), indicate that there 'exist problems of livestock theft, trespass and arson as well as the illegal cultivation and trade of dagga (marijuana)' in the MDTP area. Hone and Kiepiel indicate that the more remote and ecologically sensitive areas are targeted for these activities. The result of the use of these remote areas for these practices has been amongst others, erosion and the dynamite of stolen stock routes. Mr. Lepheeane of the LMPS also indicates that the SNP has been used as a corridor to move stolen stock between Lesotho and South Africa. While Turner (2005) attributes the conflict between stockowners to a mismatch between ERMA boundaries and community council areas, Hone (1995) and Kiepiel and Quinlan (1999) cite high poverty levels and an absence of alternative economic opportunities in the area as the cause.

4.4.4. Deepening Democracy

4.4.4.1. Chieftaincy (governance) and conservation

The on-going contest between chiefs and local councilors has its roots in the rural populace's reliance on chiefs to uphold collective access to, and need for, natural resources, particularly those that sustain livestock. This is especially so in the mountains of Lesotho where people's pre-occupation with livestock is central to the way land categories are defined in relation to each other on the one hand, and to broader economic circumstances of rural life on the other (Ray and Reddy 2003). Despite the gradual reduction of the role of the chief since the passage of the Land Act 1979 (Turner 2005), the chief in rural Lesotho is still held in high regard not only

in upholding collective resource access and administration like natural resource management.

It is the duty of every (*paramount, ward, sub-ward or village*) Chief to support, aid and maintain the King and His Government of Lesotho according to the Constitution and the other laws of Lesotho, according to their authority and direction, to serve the people in the area of his authority, to promote their welfare and lawful interests, to maintain public safety and public order among them, and to exercise all lawful powers and perform all lawful duties of his office impartially, efficiently and quickly according to the law (*emphasis added*). Chieftainship Act 22 of 1968 Sec. 6 (1).

The chief according to both the laws of chieftaincy and the constitution of the country in Lesotho is as visible as he is influential in practically all spheres of the lives of his or her subjects. This is particularly true of the chiefs' influence in Sehlabathebe. For example, 67 per cent of respondents in this study indicate that their chiefs in comparison to the 5 per cent who had bought the land have granted them land and the remaining 28 per cent has inherited it. Although the idea of land grants by local councilors is still somewhat new, many chiefs have indicated that they have been sharing the task with the newly elected councilors. As one chief put it: 'The local government people will not grant land without me. I work with them extensively.' There seems to be a general air of satisfaction about the working relationship from both the chiefs and local councilors. Despite this satisfaction however, many chiefs made no reference to councilors and instead indicated that their work is achieved with the help of the community members alone. While many councilors and chiefs have indicated the absence of some councilors because of continuing training, the inconsistency of the role and presence of chiefs in the villages can with time pose challenges to desired governance which is idealized amongst other things by a working partnership between communities, chiefs and local councilors.

For as long as local councilors are not clearly present (for reasons including training and general absenteeism) to the communities and chiefs, the rule of the chief remains the only form of governance known and practiced by the people. What this essentially

means is that those roles that chiefs, community members and community councilors have to partake in together are put on hold.

In concurrence, Ray and Reddy (2003) indicates the importance of chieftaincy in African countries and dates it back to the colonial state. Ray argues that because of the nature of violence, racism and trickery that the colonial state claimed sovereignty, it has been rather difficult for it to claim that it to win the favor of African peoples. Therefore, although the post-colonial state expresses the 'democratic will of the people', chieftaincy institutions remain favored by the people. 'Thus a people may choose to express themselves politically for many policy areas through the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions of the post-colonial state, but also decide that certain policy matters, e.g., custom, land, other local matters, are best expressed by their traditional leaders' (ibid:5). According to the author, this duality in governance is not only confined to Africa but exists also in the Americas and Australia. Both the chieftaincy and democratic institutions of governance therefore often have to act together in the same spaces – often doing so coherently.

For example, as village chief 'Maliako Lerotholi of Thamathu indicated, local councilors could not grant land without her, without local councilors, the chiefs are not legally allowed to grant land to the people either. The absence of local council representation in the local governance structures has far-reaching implications on the lives of individuals and taints the practice of decentralisation so that people might not accept it in the long term. Therefore, there is a danger that ongoing local governance through local councilors in some areas could put those areas at an advantage in comparison to the villages whose local councilors are not yet present or not fulfilling their prescribed roles.

The roles of local authorities (councilors) are outlined in section 5 (2) of the Local Government Act 6 of 1996 as follows:

[...] every local authority shall, subject to the powers reserved to or vested in any other authority by this Act, or by any other written law, be the authority, within its administrative limits, charged with the regulation, control and administration of all matters as set out in the First Schedule.

Amongst the matters outlined in the Schedule are:

- Control of Natural Resources (e.g. sand, stones) and environmental protection (e.g. dongas, pollution);
- Physical Planning;
- Grazing control;
- Parks and gardens;
- Land / Site Allocation;
- Water Resources;
- Agriculture: Services for the improvement of agriculture; and
- Forestry: preservation, improving and control of designated forests in local authority areas.

Two things can be noted about the roles of the local councilors:

1. They are heavily involved with issues of land and land based resource management; and
2. The roles of the local councilors and those of chiefs are closely related and often over-lap. This over-lapping of roles creates the potential for conflict between councilors and chiefs because in as much as both institutions work toward grass roots development, the ways in which such development is reached vary diversely. The clearest distinction that can be marked is the way in which occupancy is taken up in the respective institutions where chieftaincy is often assumed along customary lineage and patriarchal lines while the people democratically elect local councilors.

However, the mix of elected membership in the community councils could possibly fill the gap caused by an absence of role-play by local councilors in some areas.

According to the Local Government Act 6 of 1997, Sec. 4 (a):

a community council shall consist of not less than 9 elected members but not exceeding 15 elected members and not exceeding 2 gazetted chiefs (other than principal chiefs) who shall also be elected.

It can be inferred that in those places where the chief is also a member of council then the work of local council will continue if the elected local council there is not yet active in office. As shown in Table 4, in the villages of Mavuuka and Sehlabathebe, the councilors there are gazetted chiefs and they have begun to play their roles as councilors. The varied composition of the community councils therefore perhaps mediates somewhat the possible inconsistency that can already be seen in some places in Sehlabathebe.

Represented village name	Councilor Type	Activity in village
Moshebi / Sekokoaneng / Mafika-a-Lisiu / Vryhoek	Elected member	Active
Semenyane	Elected member	No activity. Councilors still in training
Thamathu	Elected member	No visible presence of council activity
Mpharane/Koung	Elected member	Some visible changes
Mavuuka	Gazetted Chief	Active
Sephelane	Elected member	Council not active
Belebesi	Elected member	No visible presence of council activity
Sehlabathebe	Gazetted Chief	Active

Table 4 The activities of councilors in their respective villages in Sehlabathebe. *Source: Author*

In order to appreciate better the importance of chiefs and their role in community councils, it is important to first understand the territorial and chieftaincy authority in Lesotho. As illustrated in Figure 8, at the crown of the chieftaincy hierarchy is the paramount chief who has authority over the whole country and therefore assumes the role of King. Lesotho is divided into ten administrative districts and in each district is a chief overseeing the land and the people on behalf of the King. It is important perhaps to note that in many cases, the boundaries of the chieftaincy do not complement those of the administrative districts. Within the district area, the land is further demarcated into smaller areas (wards/sub-wards) which are speckled with villages, each with its own chief (See Quinlan and Wallis 2003). Furthermore, the boundaries of the recent local government have not always been congruent with those

of the wards or villages either and this can perhaps be attributed to the idea that local government boundaries are primarily for the purposes of government elections contestation and consistency as opposed to forming divisions amongst the people (Shale 2004).

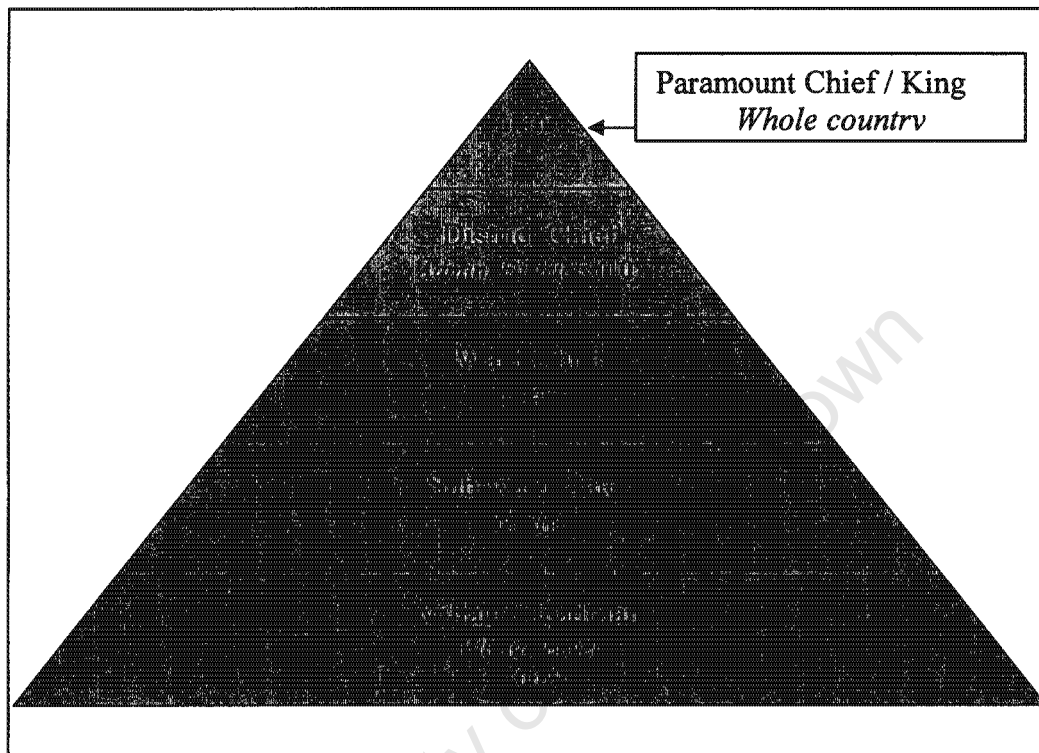


Figure 8 A pyramid description of the chieftainship and territorial differentiation of authority in Lesotho. *Source: Quinlan and Wallis 2003*

Fundamentally then the village chief is the people's first and immediate symbol and source of social and territorial authority. Depending on the land area and population of a chief's authority, many chiefs are gazetted, particularly the principal (who are also the district chiefs, assuming the second highest level of traditional authority after the paramount chief) and ward chiefs. A gazetted chief receives an allowance every month. The payment is perhaps legitimized by Section 9 of the Chieftaincy Act 22 of 1968, which dictates that, 'a principal or ward chief shall not take up or be engaged in any employment, whether paid or unpaid, except that which pertains by law to his office as Principal or Ward Chief.'

Using the traditional governance structure of Lesotho, the pyramid shows the roles and levels of chieftaincy. The pyramid attempts to illustrate the power continuum in this structure and positions the district chief. Considering the composition of the local

community councils, the pyramid also shows how village headmen for instance, are the closest to the community members and numerous in the chieftaincy hierarchy.

According to the Local Government Act 6 of 1996, only gazetted and principal chiefs can be elected into the community council. What this means is that inevitably local village chiefs are excluded from community council. This can be contested on two counts. Firstly, local village chiefs are the closest to the people in the hierarchy of chiefs and therefore they arguably know better the needs of the people. However, not being part of the community council could mean that they are distanced from possibly airing and even satisfying the real needs of the people on the ground. Their exclusion from the local council poses a threat to the main aim of decentralized governance.

Secondly, the exclusion of village chiefs from council could cause a rift between all chiefs and even loss of faith in the idea of local governance. The chieftaincy hierarchy is already riddled with problems, many having to do with the contradictions around the chieftaincy descriptions and roles. For example, ACCORD's Elections Programme convened a one-day workshop for principal chiefs in Lesotho on 8 April 2005 and among the issues to be deliberated was the understanding of gazetted chiefs¹³ and how this contradicts with principal chiefs as mentioned in the amendment to the Local Government Act 2004. Succession is also problematic in chieftaincy, particularly where his wife on behalf of an underage son succeeds a chief. The workshop also addresses this issue in light of Lesotho's promise to set aside one-third of its local council membership to women.

As it is there was some dissatisfaction with the working relations between two village chiefs in the study area and their respective principal chiefs. One chief complained that his principal chief was not alerting him of announcements being sent down by their paramount chief. He complained in particular about matters relating to the SNP saying, '...it looks like in park matters only gazetted chiefs are notified' (Sephelane, 23 Nov. 2005).

¹³ Officially receives a salary from the government for their role of chief. Unlike other chiefs, a gazetted chief is restricted to chieftaincy roles and cannot be involved in other forms of employment.

As mentioned above, in some council areas councilors have not yet started working (mainly due to various training workshops conducted by the MDTP and the Ministry of Local Government) and chiefs essentially the overseers and protectors of resources. What this means in terms of the above stated law is that although elected council chiefs, in areas where the chiefs are neither gazetted chiefs nor elected council members, can assume the roles of local councillors in some areas then development is stalled. The result could possibly be un-even development in council areas and possibly even long-term inequality in service delivery.

The role that the steering committee can possibly play in satisfying local community needs in Sehlabathebe cannot be overlooked. As part of its efforts to enhance community participation, the MDTP has set up district steering committees in the districts of Butha Buthe, Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong. The district steering committees house and represent the different stakeholders in the respective communities with the stakeholders organized into individual committees or societies themselves. 'The steering committee provides strategic guidance and identifies priority issues to be captured in MDTP district action plans, while the executive committees serve as implementing arms of the steering committees in each district' (<http://www.maloti.org/ls/progress/pcommunity.htm>).

With nine committees represented in the Sehlabathebe steering committee, many of the areas of local interest of respective communities are represented per district. For example, in the Khomo Phatsoa council area (Sehlabathebe) there is representation of sectors such as health, land and natural resources as well as herd boys. The nine committees therefore form the face of civil society in Sehlabathebe and attempt to represent the service provision areas in their respective villages.

Many of the committees represented have had elected representatives for some time now, many as far back as a year. For example, a representative of the land and natural resources committee in Thamathu indicated that, 'it has been a year and some months now that I have been a member'. It can be deduced from this statement that committee members are known in the communities because they have had time to consult with the people in their respective communities on what their needs are and have therefore had time to position themselves in terms of the areas of development they as

committees plan to address and perhaps even ways in which such will be overseen during their term in their respective committees. However, when asked about their roles in Sehlabathebe, this was the response of one land and natural resource committee representative:

The committee is still getting itself in order. It was founded so that the people could have access to medicinal plants, when these plants are dug up people must pay for them. It has already been set that when a person digs up any medicine they will have to pay M5.00 if the person is a villager of the area. If it is a person from another village/area, they pay M10.00. People are not yet been charged (interview 23 Nov. 2005).

The one area of people's lives on which they are most dependent in Sehlabathebe - land, is therefore as good as dysfunctional now, possibly affecting people's means of a livelihood. The issue of land and its management is therefore contentious in Sehlabathebe because the data indicates that while in some places elected councilors have not started work (largely due to continuing council training), particularly over natural resources, there are those that are lagging behind because of an absence of representation by community councilors and, or in the function of the committees to which they are party to.

In its vision to deepen democracy, governance, safety and security; and, manage and conserve the environment amongst its priority area, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has particularly emphasized the participation of local authorities in rural development activities (see Decurtins 2005).

It is important for chiefs to know and understand the role of the MDTP in conservation in Sehlabathebe and the role that they as chiefs are playing in the efforts of the MDTP as a conservation overseer. [People] are in a better position or are more likely to protect resources if they are conscientised of the possible benefits to be derived from their participation. For example, as Turner (2005:10) indicates, 'the concept of Grazing Associations managing Range Management Areas remains central to the policy of the Range Management Division (RMD) of the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation...the MDTP has worked with the RMD to broaden its concept

of user groups managing their own natural resources.' The local's co-operation in protecting Range Management Areas can be attributed largely to the fact that as cattle farmers, it is in their best interest to take care of their range areas.

The chiefs' views on the MDTP have been widely varied. Despite the fact that there have been committee members elected in every village to work with the MDTP on natural resource management. However, some chiefs seemed to be more knowledgeable than others on the efforts of the MDTP and their work with chiefs. For example, while one chief said: 'As a chief I sometimes go to their [MDTP] workshops...they talk about development...in the past they have given us trees for the community members and the herd boys [committee] to plant'; another said: 'We have not seen any development from them'. On relating the chief's views on the MDTP to their place in their chieftaincy hierarchy, I found that of the three chiefs who showed the most negative sentiment of the MDTP, one was a local village chief and had earlier complained of unsatisfactory working relations with his principal chief, particularly in matters relating to the park. It is possible then that this chief has been unable to partake in the activities of the MDTP because he has been unaware of them and therefore unable to take part. Similarly, the second chief is of a village furthest from the SNP and although the work of the MDTP is not directly targeted at the park, it is possible that she too was not adequately informed of the activities of the MDTP.

Assuming then that the disheartened chiefs have been unable to partake in MDTP activities because of a lack of awareness of the ongoing MDTP activities, this can be seen as one the shortcomings of communication in Sehlabathebe and amongst chiefs and its impact on development in the area. Communication and information dissemination are two areas that the MDTP will need to pay close attention to if it is to realize true participatory rural development.

The third chief's village is quite close to the SNP area. Given that he had indicated that he was working well with the councilors in his area and that he was satisfied with the consultation of developments in his village, he was particularly unhappy with the SNP. When asked to comment on the MDTP, the chief said: 'we have not seen any developments from them [MDTP]', he went further to say: 'the SNP is useless; in fact it has made our lives very difficult... We are told not to graze our animals in the park,

when we do, our livestock is detained’. In fact, the same chief had indicated in another part of the interview that he and his people continue to graze their animals inside the park. He said: ‘there is no fence so we graze inside the park...we used to graze in the *metebo* but now graze the animals here because they are stolen there [at the *metebo*]’.

Three things can be gathered from this chief’s views. Firstly, it would seem that the chief has been unable to differentiate between the MDTP and the SNP. According to the MDTP, ‘In June 2001, at Sehlabathebe National park, a bilateral agreement was signed between Lesotho and South Africa. This paved the way for the formation of the MDTP’. Furthermore, SNP is one of three nature reserves in Lesotho (Bokong and Tsehlanyane Nature Reserve) which are a part of the MDTP (Figure 2) Therefore the MDTP is a facilitator of resource management between Lesotho and South Africa.

Secondly, it seems that the chief does not have a clear understanding of why grazing in the park area is not permitted. The controlled use of resources is premised on the theory of limited resources, which based on the high resource consumption levels of the first world countries argues that resources should be used minimally and even closed off for use for future users. Governments of developing countries to promote social upliftment and to encourage community participation in decision-making using resource conservation (Mombeshora 2005; Oliveira 2002; Toulmin and Quan 2000) have increasingly adopted this idea. I highlight the point that this argument, although widely adopted in many developing countries, is based on the experiences of the first world.

The ‘traditional’¹⁴ resource use and conservation experience of rural Lesotho has been different. Traditionally Basotho have used natural resources communally, particularly grazing areas and forests for fuel wood. Although these areas were used seasonally, stockowners in communal grazing areas were given access to alternative grazing areas with season changes as a way of rehabilitating the grasses. The difference between this system of seasonal grazing and resource conservation as we know it today in its

¹⁴ Traditional here is used to mean ‘non-scientific’ as was used by rural Basotho before the introduction of scientific methods were introduced with colonialism.

many forms (for example national parks, and nature reserves) offered alternatives that allowed for the continued use of resources and common practices such as grazing.

In their account of local governance in Lesotho, Quinlan and Willis in Ray and Reddy (2003) see the role of the chief (particularly in the livestock economy) as blatantly that of caretaker and controller of the natural resource base on which the livestock depend. According to the authors, 'Subordinate chiefs control use of grassland within their areas of jurisdiction' (ibid: 166). They indicate also that access to grazing is determined by the chief and such determination is based on seasonal changes as well as area degradation.

The idea of closing off resources for conservation from use is not in line with traditional resource methods in Lesotho and is still foreign to many Basotho. For example, traditionally at the start of the spring season, the chief may decide to restrict grazing in village environs (ibid). To an extent, this practice continues in Sehlabathebe albeit not as rigorously as in the past due to stock theft amongst other things. As one chief indicated, there are three grazing areas (zones), A, B and C. At the time of the interview, it was November and she indicated that the animals were soon to go to grazing area A. She went further to say that 'in the winter it is going to be [section] C to get the animals away from the cold weather. This is done to protect the grass and to give it time to regenerate itself.' The herdboys and the land and natural resources representatives reiterated the use of this practice in the area. This is a traditional grazing rotation practice of the Basotho called '*leboella*'.

It is important to note also that the grazing areas are set against their proximity to the village. Therefore, A sites would be furthest from the village while C sites would be nearer to the village. Figure 9 illustrates the proximity and seasonal variation of use in each categorical grazing area. The varied allocation of grazing areas is along seasonal lines and can perhaps be understood in terms of both the crop seasons as well as weather conditions. According to Quinlan and Wallis (2003:166), 'Chiefs are responsible for controlling the number of livestock in the villages during the summer, and can demand their removal to grazing posts. During the winter months, their duties are primarily to restrict grazing in village environs, and when to order the removal of the majority of livestock to grazing posts.'

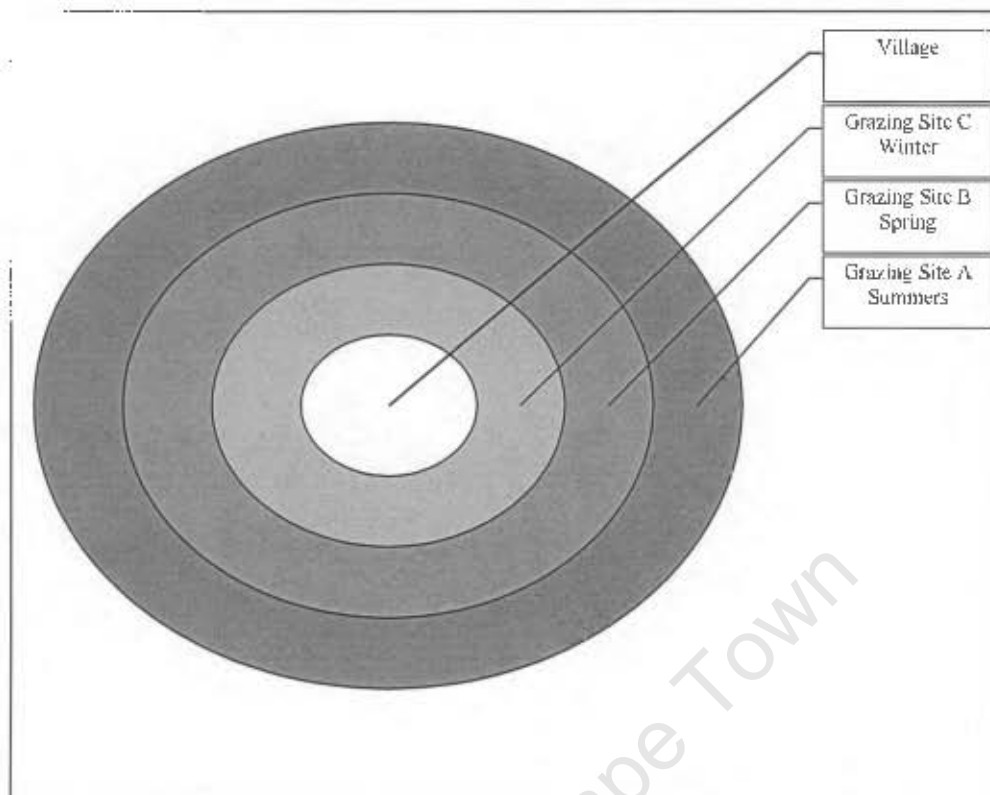


Figure 9 Grazing area (zones) - Proximity to the village and the seasonal variation on use.
(Source: author)

The new local government structure can be expected to have an impact on both agricultural and livestock practice (as outlined above) in Sehlabathebe. As it stands, the boundary drawing exercise has seen the change of *maboella* and as a result, some have had to fall under new jurisdiction. The result has often been conflict between chiefs over these newly arranged areas (see Shale 2005). It seems that the local council boundaries are not yet formally in use as people still identify themselves with the chiefs whom they consider themselves as subjects of and the villages to which they belong. As Shale (2005:4) cites from the Administrative Boundaries Commission report, 'there is a great deal of ignorance on the part of the public with regard to the establishment of community councils ... people are not yet very clear on the distinction between the functions of the proposed community councils versus those of the chief.'

The issue of land use and practices such as seasonal grazing under council area (boundaries) therefore becomes especially concerning not only because of the ignorance that local people seem to have but also because of the changes that the new

boundaries bring. For example, according to the Ntlafalang Consultants Report (1998) it was proposed that the district council of Qacha's Nek district council have 21 community councils. As shown in Table 5, the administrative boundaries commission proposed twelve council areas for the Qacha's Nek district in 2004. Based on that alone, it can be inferred that the district of Qacha's Nek will be highly disjointed and its social networks fragmented. Using the relationships of people in Lesotho and nearby Ladybrand (a neighboring South African town in the Free State province) as an example, Shale (2005:6) argues that 'the activities of the people can only be defined in terms of boundaries if by boundaries is meant the area to the extent of the socio economic activities of a given group of people.' According to the author, the new council area boundaries if rigid pose a danger of creating conflict instead of bringing about interdependence between community councils. As it is, there is high contestation around chieftaincy village boundaries and the increase of council areas could only mean that land areas not only become smaller but also that the influence of the chief is under greater threat.

DISTRICT	NO. OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS	
	Ntlafalang Consultants Report 1998	Administrative Boundaries Commission 2004
Botha Bothe	17	10
Leribe	21	18
Berea	20	10
Maseru	21	15
Mafeteng	20	12
Mohale's Hoek	21	14
Quthing	20	10
Qacha's Nek	21	12
Mokhotlong	20	13
Thaba-Tseka	20	15
TOTAL	201	129

Table 5 A comparison of the proposed District Councils and the number of Community Councils in Lesotho. Source: Ntlafalang Consultants Report and Administrative Boundaries Commission Report 2004 as cited in (Shale (2005))

The chiefs' questioning of the restriction of grazing within the park area can also be explained in terms of what Cock and Koch (1991) call the idea of 'green politics'. The authors' line of argument is based on the premise that in southern Africa in particular, resource conservation issues are essentially drawn on power relations and access, thus making them a political issue. In their words, the authors say:

...this perspective views environmental issues as deeply political in the sense that they are embedded in access to power and resources in society...It draws on the ideology of 'green politics' to emphasize the importance of linking the struggle against social injustice and the exploitation of people with the struggle against the abuse of the environment (Cock and Koch (1991:1)).

On the one hand, in southern Africa, this view has often caused suspicion amongst people about conservation, often associating conservation with relocations and the loss of resource rights. This is perhaps because 'all too often the demands of the Western conservation ideology conflict with the legitimate needs of usually

impoverished rural communities' (ibid: 213). On the other hand, this 'progressive, developmental perspective' as rooted in green politics attempts to make the power sharing between the resource user and conservator so that relations between the two are more balanced.



Figure 10 Cattle grazing inside the park area. Source: Author.

Lastly, the fines and fence approach has not reduced the use of the park for grazing (see Figure 10) but has perhaps perpetuated stock theft in the area. While grazing areas are not limited to the park, the park offers better forage because it has been preserved while surrounding areas, closer to the villages do not. This is clearly attributable to environmental degradation – which is clear even to the naked eye (Figure 11).



Figure 11 Grass outside of the park fence (left) and inside the SNP (right). Source: author.

The issue of stock theft highlights the difficulties surrounding conservation and governance issues in Sehlabathebe and therefore essentialising stock theft as a threat to development in the area. Furthermore, although approaches to conservation are not necessarily the core of this discussion, the fencing and fining approach to conservation as seen in the SNP illustrates the unworkable questions troubling development.

If categorically development is defined as 'progression' then the current fines and fences approach to conservation in SNP (see Ramutsindela 2004; Hutton and Roe. 2005) - reflects the paradoxical challenge to development of moving ahead and doing better. I use the example of the fines and fences approach because it is reminiscent of colonial conservation as often being segregationist and disenfranchising to the long-standing park user to the benefit of the conserver. The implications of this practice have been grave and the above-illustrated situation with the chief is a reflection of presence and even practice of this disempowering practice in SNP.

In addition, the use of the fines and fences approach is a reflection of the shortfalls of development. In the case of the chief who does not see why he can no longer graze his cattle in the park area, development has not satisfied its definition as offered by Shale (2004:2) as the: '...improvement of the social and economic lives of the people.' It is conclusive in this context then that development is still very much trapped in its past; a past which it so rigorously attempts to overcome.

In sum, the role that chiefs can play in the conservation and governance of natural resources in Sehlabathebe is of great importance and even crucial. However, the mix of issues (such as local council chieftaincy composition, chieftaincy rank, culturally prescribed chieftaincy roles and awareness of conservation activity) as I have attempted to illustrate above could be problematic to the participation of the chieftaincy and therefore the success of the conservation and governance project in Sehlabathebe.

4.4.5. Peace and Stability

In a study seeking to explore the experiences and perceptions/views of residents in the selected villages (in three districts) on issues relating to conflict in their respective communities, Shale¹⁵ et al. (2005) found boundaries to be the second amongst five chief causes of village conflicts. The issue of internal boundaries in Lesotho has for a long time been a highly contested issue and remains a source of conflict in the definition of chieftaincy jurisdiction. New boundaries are also reopening conflict in many parts of rural Lesotho. For example, the local government boundary demarcation has changed some chiefs' areas of influence. In such a situation, territorial-bound conflict over boundaries often arises between village chiefs under a ward or principal chief whose confirmation of the village chiefs' boundary favors one over another (ibid).

Several measures have been taken to mediate conflicts around land disputes and these include provisions in government acts such as the Land Act of 1979, the Local Government Act (1996) as amended and the Chieftaincy Act 22 of 1968. Shale et al. (2005b) found that conflict is usually managed through the following institutions: 1. the chief's courts (*khotla*), 2. Police intervention; and 3. Community self-policing. The Local Government councilors handbook also declares it amongst the duties of the local councilor to intervene where (land based) conflict arises in his/her constituency.

According to Section 82 (1) of the Local government act 1996 as amended, the Minister may, whenever he deems it necessary to do so, appoint a Boundaries Commission by a notice published in the Gazette. The result has been the formation and appointment of the Administrative Boundaries Commission. The commission was appointed by the Minister of Local Government in preparation for the local government elections of 2002.

15 Shale, M.M. (2006). The Philosophy of Peace and Conflict Management in Selected Villages in Lesotho: A Peoples Perspective.

The functions of the commission are outlined in the Local Government Act No.6 of 1996 in Section 83 as thus:

- a) To review existing administrative and electoral boundaries;
- b) To receive and consider any proposals from the public for the revision of administrative or electoral boundaries which may be made or referred to them; and
- d) To demarcate new administrative and electoral boundaries having regard to the interest and identity of local communities, to secure effective local governance and development.

As per subsection (b) of the above-mentioned Act, Ntlafulang Consultants did preliminary work on local government boundaries in 1998 (Shale 2005). Shale further indicates that, 'The consultants were mandated to review the then existing criteria used to delineate administrative and electoral boundaries in Lesotho, and to propose the new criteria to be used for administrative and electoral purposes' (ibid:3).

It is agreed that demarcation is necessary if there is to be greater efficiency in service delivery and enhancing the quality of governance (Ramutsindela and Simon 1999; Shale 2005). Although there is not any one general method or reason for the demarcation of space, it can be generalized as a stepping-stone towards democracy. This democratic step can be further broken down into people-centered, political and economical proponents.

The people centered component is best articulated in Shale (2005) as he argues that along with ushering local councils into place, the demarcation process has to pay adequate attention to the people-to-people relations in the spaces within which it takes place. To satisfy subsection (d) of the act, the Administrative Boundaries commission undertook a demarcation exercise in Lesotho. According to Shale (2005), the local people took part in the negotiation process through community gatherings (*lipitso*) while their respective district chiefs represented village chiefs. Shale (ibid) criticizes the exercise on two grounds, firstly, the gatherings were problematic because of bad timing such as harvest time, and secondly; in some places the negotiators used threats and other coercive measures. Coupled with the fact that for a long time Lesotho has

had a problem with (internal) boundary making and authority over such boundaries, the task of the administrative boundaries commission was filled with conflicts, both in the physical demarcation process as well as the social component of the demarcation exercise.

Politically, the demarcation process is thought to be useful as a way of lowering the chances of gerrymandering during voting periods and to allow local authorities to operate within legally and clearly defined boundaries for better service delivery. Glassner (1996:207) defines gerrymandering as ‘...a device to give an advantage to a particular party or group by drawing district boundaries in advantageous shapes’. Most important however is perhaps that demarcation is useful in determining areas¹⁶ in which people can contest local government elections (Shale 2005) and in turn offering a space for the government to expand its influence into areas where it might have previously not been held. It can be concluded then that politically, demarcation aids manageability for local government authorities.

As already indicated, the decision to demarcate boundaries in Lesotho was based on a consultative process that saw recommendations from two consultative bodies. Using the Qacha’s Nek district as a case in point, Ntlafalang Consultants (1998) recommended that the district be divided into 21 community councils while the Administrative Boundaries Commission (2002) recommended 12 councils (see table 5). It is difficult to determine which of the two recommendations is best suited to the situation in Sehlabathebe based on the total population but there is certainly too wide a disparity in the number of recommended council areas and this raises questions on proportionality and the electorate’s advantage (or disadvantage) in contesting the government elections in their respective districts. Furthermore, on the issue of manageability to local councilors, the long distance(s) between some villages which fall under the same councilor (such as councilor Moteuli in Semenyane, Edward and Sephelane), bring to question decisions to put those villages in the same council area.

¹⁶ Area in this paper is interpreted as in the Local Government Act (1996) Section 2 as: ‘a Community Council, a Rural Council and Urban Council or any Municipal Council, constituted for any Community area, Rural area, Urban area or Municipal are respectively.’

I highlight that the Administrative Boundary Commission's recommendation was appointed because a statutory body made it, thereby giving credibility to the demarcation process (ibid).

Lastly, demarcation also has economic implications in that as is the promise of decentralisation, demarcation enhances the provision of services by bringing them closer to the people. Essentially then what it means is that people, particularly those in remote areas far from service centers are given a chance to access fundamental services such as health care without having to incur transportation costs. For example, to get access to banking and administrative services such as migration offices, the people of Sehlabathebe have to take a four-hour trip to Qacha's Nek. Using the case of the Bantustans in South Africa, Ramutsindela (1999) cautions that in taking this direction in development (as bringing services closer to the people), African states need to be careful so as not to – perhaps unintentionally, provoke segregation through its rural development programmes and strategies such as was the design of the apartheid government.

Development theory assumed also that because demarcation allows the operation of local authorities to act within legally defined boundaries, it furthers the skills required by local councilors to deal with governance at not only the local level but also at the national level. Indeed, there has been a vast improvement in the provision of services in Sehlabathebe as I have discussed at length in subsection 4.4.3 of this chapter.

During an interview with Mrs. Moteuli (18 Nov. 2005), a councilor at Ha Semenyane, she showed us a training schedule which had activities planned from October to December 2005, varying from district level training workshops to *lipitso* by the councilors in their respective electoral divisions. The local councilors were therefore undergoing rigorous training on issues varying from conducting pitsos to fundraising. It seems impossible to conceive development as independent of spatial division and demarcation. The demarcation process therefore plays a crucial role in development and in the case of Lesotho in particular, in the management of land and land based resources. However, as earlier mentioned, the land question in Lesotho and authority over land remains highly contested and unresolved. As Shale (2005:8) indicates, 'Lesotho has always been faced with problems pertaining to overlapping chieftaincy boundaries and overlapping district boundaries...the amalgamation of the

councils...has added to the problem because the chieftaincy boundaries have not been corrected’.

Although, in many cases land-based conflict is over chieftaincy boundaries, there are also instances in which conflict is caused by claims over common land. For example, Turner (2005) highlights the longstanding conflict over the Matebeng and Sehlabathebe range Management area. Makatjane (personal comm. 2005) indicates however that in cases where conflict is over common land such as is the case in the above-mentioned scenario, neither of the conflicting parties have real claim over the land or the resources therein. Therefore, as much as the demarcation process has caused confusion among people about who rightfully has power over what spaces; the situation of conflict over common spaces is treated differently.

For example, in the Sehlabathebe National Park - legally the park is not seen as belonging to any one council area (see Turner 2005) but it is so closely situated to the different villages that it has often been used as a site of resistance by its surrounding villages. The result of the park’s proximity to villages such as is the case with Sehlabathebe village has often resulted in the killing of wild animals in the park and the occasional burning of park grass as a sign of resistance. The condition of the park fence in Figure 12 should be noted. This is likely to be the result of trampling of animals into and out of the park as well as people using the park as a through road to the Underberg pass and to reach other villages. As Ramutsindela (2004:49) indicates, ‘the community currently living around the SNP originally used the area (on which the park has been established) for crop production and as a rangeland...The community still feels that it has rightful ownership over the land, and has constantly contested the loss of their land to the park by burning the park every year to date (that is 2003).’



Figure 12 Park fence and proximity to a Sehlabathebe village. Source: Author.

Only two percent of the respondents of the villages in Sehlabathebe counted the change in park boundaries among the changes that they would like in the long term. This was unexpected as there seemed to be so much dissatisfaction with the park on so many other grounds. For example, respondents complained about the income generation and employment opportunities that the park had promised to make available but according to them, poor administration has resulted in failure to deliver the promises by park management.

Another area of dissatisfaction amongst the respondents was around the size of the park. Respondents (particularly those who pointed out a need for long-term change in the park) indicated that if the park area could be minimized, then maybe they would have access to more wood and grazing grounds. It was interesting also that chiefs in their capacity as guardians of the park and its resources, also felt that the park area needed to be sized down. Of the eight chiefs interviewed, three showed clear resentment to the park size.

The issue of the size of the SNP can perhaps be analyzed as a spatial demarcation issue. Demarcation in Sehlabathebe is problematic on two counts. On the one hand, as Raffestin (cited in Fall 2005:21) states, 'the boundaries of spatial entities are linked to power and identity: boundaries are the focus of power relations, inscribing projects into space. A boundary thus expresses the limits of a territorial project, a territory, as a

structuring element'. In the case of Lesotho, boundaries are the focus of the power relations between chiefs and their subjects. The way in which the SNP was demarcated is therefore important because it sheds light not only on the power relations in that space at the time of demarcation but perhaps more important, on the way(s) in which people identify and relate with the park to date.

The desire by some respondents for the park to be smaller is open to the interpretation that there is not enough understanding of people (including their chiefs) overall conservation exercise. Currently the SNP is already small compared to the size of biodiversity that needs protection (see Appendix 3). Some of the respondents seem to fail to appreciate that they cannot use certain resources and spaces in the name of development when for a long time they have freely used those resources to satisfy their (often pressing) day-to-day needs. In this way, the issue of park size can be seen as caused by both a lack of understanding and awareness conserving resources in the name of development (on the part of the long-standing user) and the desirability of conserving resources.

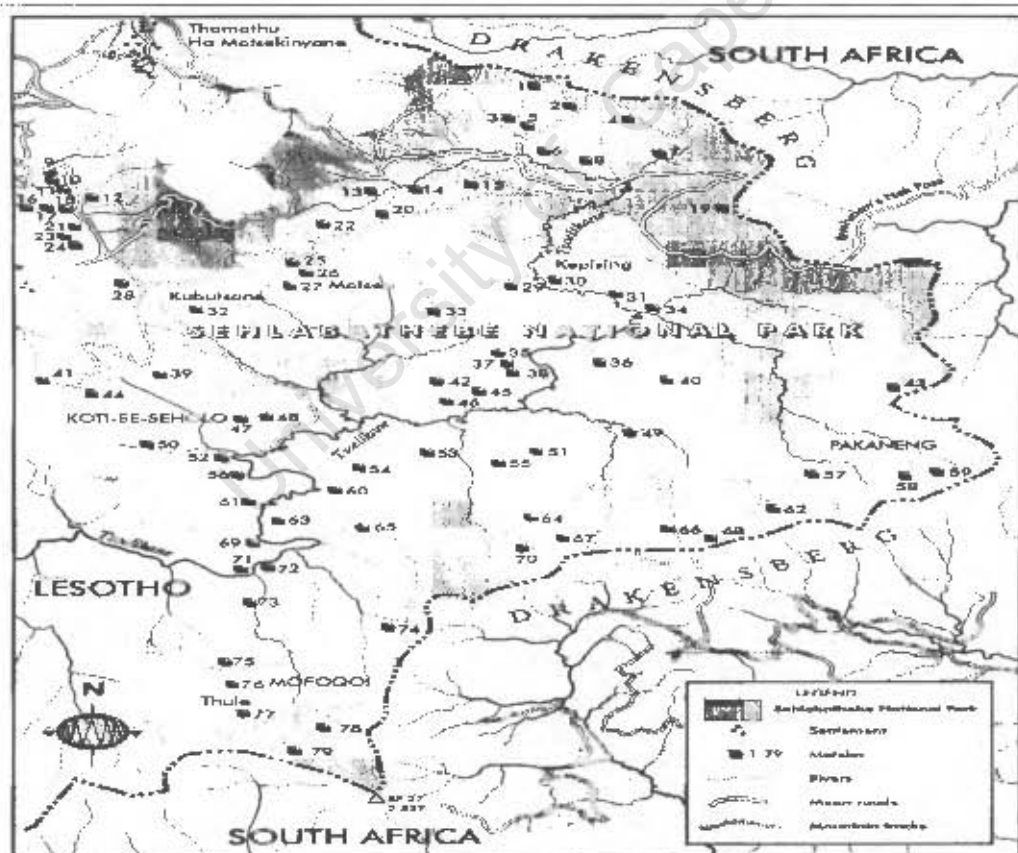
Given the history of the Leabua's regime and its power relations with the chiefs in Lesotho, one can see that it could be that the area cover of the SNP could be contested not only on its size but also on political and identity defenses. Firstly, the declaration of the park area for development clearly undermined the power of the relevant chiefs to make decisions over that land; and secondly, the park became affiliated with the National ruling party of the time not only because it made the decision to close off the area for development but also because of the power that was represented in that area. It is on the latter basis that it can be argued that opponents of the BNP would use the SNP as an area of resistance. The political sentiments of the previous users of the park area seem to resonate through generations and 26 years later, the situation shows little sign of development. It can be inferred then that there has been little change in the attitudes of many of the resource users about authority in the park and the function that the park area and the resources therein play in the national and even global significance of development.

The apparent lack of understanding on the significance of conserving resources in the SNP is perhaps a good illustration of development as an exclusive concept.

Development in this regard is exclusive in that it is understood and implemented at the top (nationally and globally), to fulfill development intentions at those levels. However, the same understanding seems to fail to seep down to the local community levels where its impact is felt and where it causes the most destruction as a result of confusion and resentment.

4.4.5.1 SNP: Political and Cultural icon?

The resistance to the SNP reflects the political and cultural ties that people have of the enclosed park area. Prior to its declaration as a wildlife sanctuary in the 1970s, the area was a range management area used for the seasonal migration of animals because of its lush grasses, the river (Tsoelikane) running through it as well as its remoteness from villages. In the area were *metebo*¹⁷ owned by different families in the surrounding villages



¹⁷ Cattle posts often with simple huts housing shepherds and located far from the village and hidden from view. A flock is tended here in the summer seasons when grasses are green and lush in the open mountain areas.

Figure 13 Metebo in SNP. Source: Ramutsindela 2004.

According to a respondent from the village of Semenyane (28 August 2005), in 1933 there were metebo in what is now the SNP area (Figure 13). A respondent who was born and raised in Sehlabathebe said that there was another rangeland (neighboring what is now the park area) towards the Sani pass area called 'Mehloling' – it is not far from the villages of Sehlabathebe but the people of Sehlabathebe did not use the area because there were already people in the area from Mashaii. The inhabitants of Sehlabathebe were therefore left to rely on the park area for rangeland. Furthermore, the respondent said that one of the families that owned metebo inside the park were of the surname 'Bane'. 'The Bane belonged to the Batlokoa clan and they were from the Mosaqane area. Moshoeshe¹⁸ is also from Mosaqane' the respondent added. 'The use of the park area to the people of Sehlabathebe was a significant means of livelihood' (ibid); especially to the cattle farmers. The respondent's claim also highlights the chieftaincy authority over the area prior to 1970.

In an area with such close ties to the monarchy, it can be expected that the influence of the ruling chief was very strong. The clan system is still very popular in Lesotho, with all Basotho distantly related to the king but associating in some way with the chieftaincy through clans and totems. After all chieftaincy in Lesotho is a network fashioned by King Moshoeshe¹⁹. As Gay and Green (2001:6) indicate, 'Moshoeshe created a network of chiefs and sub-chiefs, which he placed in key places in the expanding nation. Most of these were members of his own family, but in certain areas he had to yield authority to leaders of clans only distantly related to Moshoeshe's own *Bakoena* (crocodile) clan. Moshoeshe (and later, his sons and grandsons), ruled over this political structure.' In addition to the chieftaincy of the Sehlabathebe area chieftaincy prior to 1970 is the role of chiefs in Basotho²⁰ tradition.

The chieftaincy in Lesotho is very influential in issues of land ownership and allocation. The removal of owners of the metebo in 1972 was clearly problematic not

¹⁸ Moshoeshe I (1786-1870) Basotho King. Considered to be the founding father of the Basotho nation.

¹⁹ See Ndebele (2006) for a reappraisal of King Moshoeshe's leadership www.uovs.ac.za/.../documents/ALL/Homepage/.

²⁰ (Sotho speaking people) of Lesotho.

only because it meant that the owners had to find new areas to graze their cattle but also that traditionally, the cattle owners felt that they were the owners and grandeurs of land in the area. According to the respondent, the people were asked to leave on behalf of the paramount chief Bereng to make way for land development.

The combination of cattle owners' eviction from the park and what the Bane must have seen as demotion of their power caused great resentment towards the SNP. The way in which locals relate to the park is important in that it influences both the management of resources within the park and the role that chiefs play in influencing such management.

Given also, the state of political affairs of the time, it is possible that the chieftaincy itself was split along political lines so that the Bane for example were not followers of the Jonathan led Basotho National Party (BNP). Based on the information that chief Bereng on behalf of chief Leabua could have possibly caused a rift in the chieftaincy because of Leabua's high political profile evicted park area users. Although this is not conclusive, it is not altogether too foreign an idea. It is probable that those in favor of Leabua as a chief also had political affiliation with his party and vice versa. Meaning that those chiefs that were not BNP supporters, like the Bane, could have felt that their authority in the SNP area was undermined.

4.4.5.2 Resistance and Surrender: Views of the SNP

The differing perceptions of respondents of the SNP have particularly been based on employment in the park, the size of the park, resource use of the lack thereof in the park. About employment in the park: During the rule of Leabua there were the '*fatho-fatho*' developments programmes which paid people for doing manual work in their communities with food stuffs and agricultural inputs. In addition, an interesting dynamic here is that some people are actively and visibly resentful of the park, going as far as disclosing their continued grazing in the park. Others while unhappy with the park are still observing the laws, hence the subtitle resistance and surrender. Despite their dissatisfaction some people have surrendered their power to the law.

4.4.5.3 Stock theft as an indicator of resistance to conservation in SNP

The data collected has shown stock theft amongst other things to increasingly become a concern and this has affected both governance and resource management in Sehlabathebe. According to Dzimba and Matooane (2005), of the 1,850 animals stolen in 2003/4, 76 per cent were recovered. Despite this high recovery rate, stock theft remains a concern because of the incidence of violence that has often resulted from it (see Figure 14).

In a study in ten villages in southern Lesotho, Kynoch et al²¹ have characterized stock theft as follows:

- Stock theft is not new in that border zone. It became more widespread, organized and violent in the 1990s. Some 71 per cent of the Basotho stockowners have reported having had stock stolen since 1990, many more than once. Over 40 per cent of non-stockowners say they do not have animals because of stock theft;
- Since 1990, 85 per cent of stockowners in the border villages have lost animals to thieves compared with 49 per cent from non-border villages. Shepherds from border villages reported a higher rate of victimization (83 per cent) than those further from the border (50 per cent).
- Most cattle and sheep are stolen from cattle posts where only shepherds guard them. Stock is also taken from kraals, and on occasion whole villages have been attacked and all livestock driven away.
- Cattle are stolen more frequently than other animals, but this is because more people own them. Sheep are stolen in greater numbers, probably a result of the larger numbers of sheep owned. In 40 per cent of thefts, cattle

²¹ Kynoch et al. as cited in Dzimba and Matooane (2005:20).

were stolen. Theft of sheep occurred in 30 per cent of thefts, goats in 13 per cent, horses in 13 per cent, and donkeys in 4 per cent;

- The study identified seasonal variations in stock theft. It was found, for example, that this situation obtained for two villages where cross-border accessibility was largely determined by the level of the Senqu River. These villages reported that theft was much worse in winter, when the river was low.

In the villages around the SNP, there have been several incidences of violence related to stock theft. At the time of data collection, there had been several homes burnt down in the village of Edward. Both the villagers and the police representative said that the arson had been of the homes of individuals suspected of stock theft.

The data does not show significant numbers in the number of cattle and sheep that respondents own in the different villages. 48 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not own any animals at all while 45 per cent owned between 1 and 10 cattle. Although these figures are not comparable to the number of cattle that the respondents claim to have previously owned, many indicated that they had lost many of their cattle to theft in the past and had been forced to either abandon the idea of rearing cattle or start afresh. For example, a respondent at Sephelane indicated that he had owned over 100 head of cattle, approximately 500 sheep, 5 horses and some goats. According to the respondent, a group of men armed with guns stole all of his animals in one night. The respondent says that it was later claimed that his animals had been taken to a place called Matebeng in Thaba Tseka (anonymous, 18 November 2005).



Figure 14 A kraal once home to several cattle, now stolen at Ha-Sephelane. Source: Author.

According to the Mr. Lepheane, the police representative, syndicates in both Sehlabathebe and Thaba Tseka did theft of this magnitude and that the two groups have been stealing from one another. The police representative indicated the following as challenges to their work in Sehlabathebe:

- 'Bad roads affect the deployment of staff' which hampers the professionalism of the police service. For example, there is a problem with killings because of stock theft. It takes too long to get to the source of a crime and makes it difficult to cut down the crime statistics';
- '...It is especially concerning because people often kill one another because of stock theft'; and
- Community members are not forthcoming with proof of evidence. For example, there are arson cases that are still open now and it is hard to solve cases because the community is not forthcoming with the details of those events. It is hard to penetrate crimes in the area because the people here are very protective of one another based on political affiliation' (Thamathu, 21 Nov. 2005).

Mr. Lepheane's account is very useful in highlighting the need for services and infrastructure in Sehlabathebe and perhaps the need for co-operation in governance amongst not only the councilors and chiefs in Sehlabathebe alone but also with its neighboring villages/communities. The importance of relations between local authorities is also articulated by Shale (2005:10) wherein he concludes that '...the

demarcation of local authorities' boundaries, while meant to enhance good service delivery and to promote popular participation, has to be conducted in such a manner that it also achieves an enhanced people-to-people relationship which is equally important for good governance and democracy'.

Apart from its impact on council and communal people-to-people relations, stock theft could be threatening to the conservation processes within the Sehlabathebe National Park. As Dzimba and Matooane's study has already indicated, stock theft has been particularly rife in border areas since 1990. The SNP has been a useful passage for stolen cattle between South Africa and Lesotho because of its remoteness from the communities on both sides of the border and because of the low security within the park area. According to Mr. Molefi, two or three warders operate a park warden in the SNP, the whole park area. The wardens are not very few in number for the 6 500 ha area but the warden also indicated that sometimes they have to patrol the area on foot. The SNP being as understaffed and under resourced as it is makes it available for the easy movement of stolen and illegal goods. For example, Ellis (1994) documented events in the 1980s wherein the South African Special Forces and some military intelligence officers had significant interests in ivory trade. The ivory was being imported raw from Angola, Mozambique and other places further North in the continent. Whilst these soldiers were placed in border regions to secure South African territory from their warring neighbor nations, the soldiers were 'cynically condoning the slaughter of animals to which a high symbolic values is attached such as elephants' (ibid: 1). Similar to the situation as outlined by Ellis (1994), stock theft in this regard poses a great threat to conservation efforts in Sehlabathebe.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study has attempted to analyze the ideological differences underpinning decentralisation in natural resource conservation and local government. In an attempt to get a better understanding of views on development, the study has sought to tease them from key actors in development in Sehlabathebe - local community members, government officials, local community councilors and the MDTP. Furthermore, as indicated in the introduction, the study interrogates decentralisation of governance and natural resource management in terms of the possible changes in use and conservation of natural resources in Sehlabathebe.

The study revealed that in terms of natural resource use and conservation, there are similarities in the efforts of the Lesotho government and the MDTP; wherein both institutions idealize community participation in natural resource conservation initiatives with an aim of promoting local community ownership. While there is no indication that the community members have rejected these ideas of development, there is a danger that they might be rejected. Firstly, some village chiefs indicated that there is a lack of co-operation between themselves and their sub/ward chiefs. The lack of co-operation has been equated to poor communication (from ward to village chiefs) regarding proposed developments in their villages. The result is that some village chiefs have expressed concern that they and their subjects are being excluded from the developments by the MDTP. In such cases, the idea of development as a tool for giving the electorate greater control in development processes is at risk of failure because chiefs and their subjects are not given the space to participate fully.

Secondly, in those council areas where local community councilors have not yet started their work in office, the villages that they serve are lagging behind in taking part in conservation initiatives and development in these areas has stalled. The inconsistency in development in the country therefore goes against the country's objectives as outlined in the Programme for Implementation of Local Government in Lesotho (2003), according to which the country attempts to realise equitable

development through the distribution of human, institutional and infrastructural resources.

In order for the development process to be truly participatory, it needs to be transparent (between all role players) and it should be uniform so that the development of some areas does not lag too far behind that of others.

Also similar in development ideology is the idea of understanding and promoting the linkages between development and the environment. The MDTP has particularly played a leading role in facilitating the roles of the various actors involved in natural resource protection in Sehlabathebe. For example, the roles of local community members, the MDTP and the Lesotho government are common. This is visible for example through the SNP steering committee (with a mix of societies representative of the social groupings in the Sehlabathebe community) through its heir work on development using the park as a common development tool. Generally, there is co-operation between the various actors in the development process in Sehlabathebe and particularly among community members and the chieftaincy, where good people-to-people relations enable co-operation. People-to-people relations are therefore essential for the success of the development process in Sehlabathebe.

The idea of reducing poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS (as expressed by the Government of Lesotho 2003) as an indicator of development has been well received in Sehlabathebe. This is evidenced by the close working relations between the development actors through working committees, which seek to promote for example health and welfare, like the village health workers and the HIV/AIDS support group and in alleviating poverty strategies such as horse shoe gardens.

There has been a match particularly in the ideas of development as expressed by the Government of Lesotho and the MDTP. However, there have also been some disparities in development thinking, particularly on the part of the local community.

Where the Lesotho government and the MDTP attempts development in terms of economic growth, nature based tourism has been proposed as the main tool. The local community of Sehlabathebe has embraced this idea somewhat through the sale of

implements in the park to tourists for example. However, generally, the local community members have shown greater interest in agriculture and farm based income generation methods such as crop sales and wool (from their animals) processing. Contrary to the nature conservation-based idea of economic development, the local community members' idea of development is more agriculture/farm based. While the two views are closely related and can possibly be merged, it is illustrative of how important it is for the development tool to be tailor fitted to satisfy its beneficiaries' needs and aspirations. Furthermore, the people of Sehlabathebe showed greater interest in welfare services such as hospitals, roads, water (taps) – all of which are welfare services as opposed to being a means of income generation. The local community members' understanding of development is therefore mostly welfare based.

Another area of difference in development ideology in Sehlabathebe has revolved around boundary making. For the MDTP and the Lesotho government, boundaries are developmental in that they aid spatial (resource) planning and political coherence, respectively. The local community conceives the boundary demarcation exercise differently. In the case of natural resource based boundaries – as in the SNP fencing – some of the community members and chiefs have shown clear resentment to this boundary as it imposes restricted use of the resources within the park area. The study has traced this resentment to the political history of the park and perhaps a lack of awareness and understanding of the idea of conserving natural resources in the name of development.

While the concept of restricted resource use is not new to the Basotho – there are *maboella* – the park conservation is different in that the natural resources are reserved indefinitely. Whereas in the case of *maboella*, natural resources were reserved for a season or two at a time. The resentment to the park is a manifestation of ideological difference of development because in Basotho culture land is communal and cannot be exclusive to use except in the case of *maboella*.

Socially and politically, the drawing of council boundaries has far-reaching implications for the identity of community members as a unit and for chieftaincy authority. In places where the local government administrative council boundaries do

not match those of village, chieftaincy authority it means a chief's area of authority is nominal and that some of his subjects have to fall under the rule of another chief. In rural Lesotho where traditional authority remains dominant, the issues of identity and chieftaincy authority remain dominant. Therefore, while the MDTP and the Lesotho government conceive boundary making as developmental because it creates order and accountability, local communities see it as disruptive and disempowering.

The study concludes that indeed natural resource conservation and state decentralisation are useful development tools. However, the apparent disparities in development understanding at local and state level(s) pose several challenges to the development project. However, it is my view also that once highlighted - as I have attempted in this dissertation - the ideological differences can be reconciled to work towards a workable formula for development.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule for village chiefs

Questionnaire No.: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Date and Time of Interview: _____

Name of Chief: _____

Name of village: _____

1. What are the roles of the chief?
.....
2. Do you fulfill all of these roles? Why?
.....
3. Will your role change now that there are councilors in the village?
Yes ☐ No ☐ Why?
.....
4. What is the population in this village
5. What type of infrastructure is available in this village? *(please tick appropriate box/es)*

Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post office	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Roads	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bank	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Transport
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital/Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Police Station	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Any other infrastructure that I may have left out?
.....

6. How have the above-mentioned services been financed? How many resulted from community?
7. In the developments that have taken place, had you been consulted about them?
8. In what way(s) were these consultations conducted?
9. What has the SNP done for this village?
10. Who is currently supporting developments in the village? How?
11. What developments do you feel are needed in the village?
12. How do you plan to finance the envisioned developments?
13. How was the decision reached to undertake those particular developments?
14. Where do people in this village graze their livestock?
15. Have they always grazed their livestock there?
16. If no, why did they change their grazing area?
17. What penalty do you have for people that graze their livestock in the park?
18. Any comments on the SNP (and or MDTP)?

MDTP Interview Schedule

Name of Respondent : _____

Position/ Title: _____

Date and time of interview : _____

1. List the 3 immediate priorities for your organization with regard to Sehlabathebe? (the idea here is to get the MDTP to talk about Sehlabathebe as a whole-the park and the villages).
a.....
b.....
c.....

How have these priority areas been decided upon?

2. What village(s) are targeted for these plans and why?
3. How are finances allocated to the respective plans?(by percentage)
4.

0-20	20-40	40-60	60-80
80-100			
5. What has the MDTP done in Sehlabathebe so far?
6. What are the future long term plans for Sehlabathebe?

Questionnaire for Steering Committee

Questionnaire No.: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Respondent : _____

Title of respondent: _____

Date and time of interview: _____

1. When and how did you become a member?
2. What is your role as a member?
3. When did your organization begin its work in this community?
- 10.
11. How do you involve community members in the committee?
12. Who finances the committee's activities?
13. What has the SNP done for this area?
14. Who is currently supporting developments in Sehlabathebe? How?
15. Any comments on the SNP and/or MDTP?

7. For what reasons have you been unable to do the things that you may have liked to have done so far?
8. Has there been any external source of funding for your activities in Sehlabathebe?
9. What role does the Lesotho government play in your work that your organization does in Sehlabathebe?
10. What general comments(s) would you like to make about the work of MDTP in Sehlabathebe?

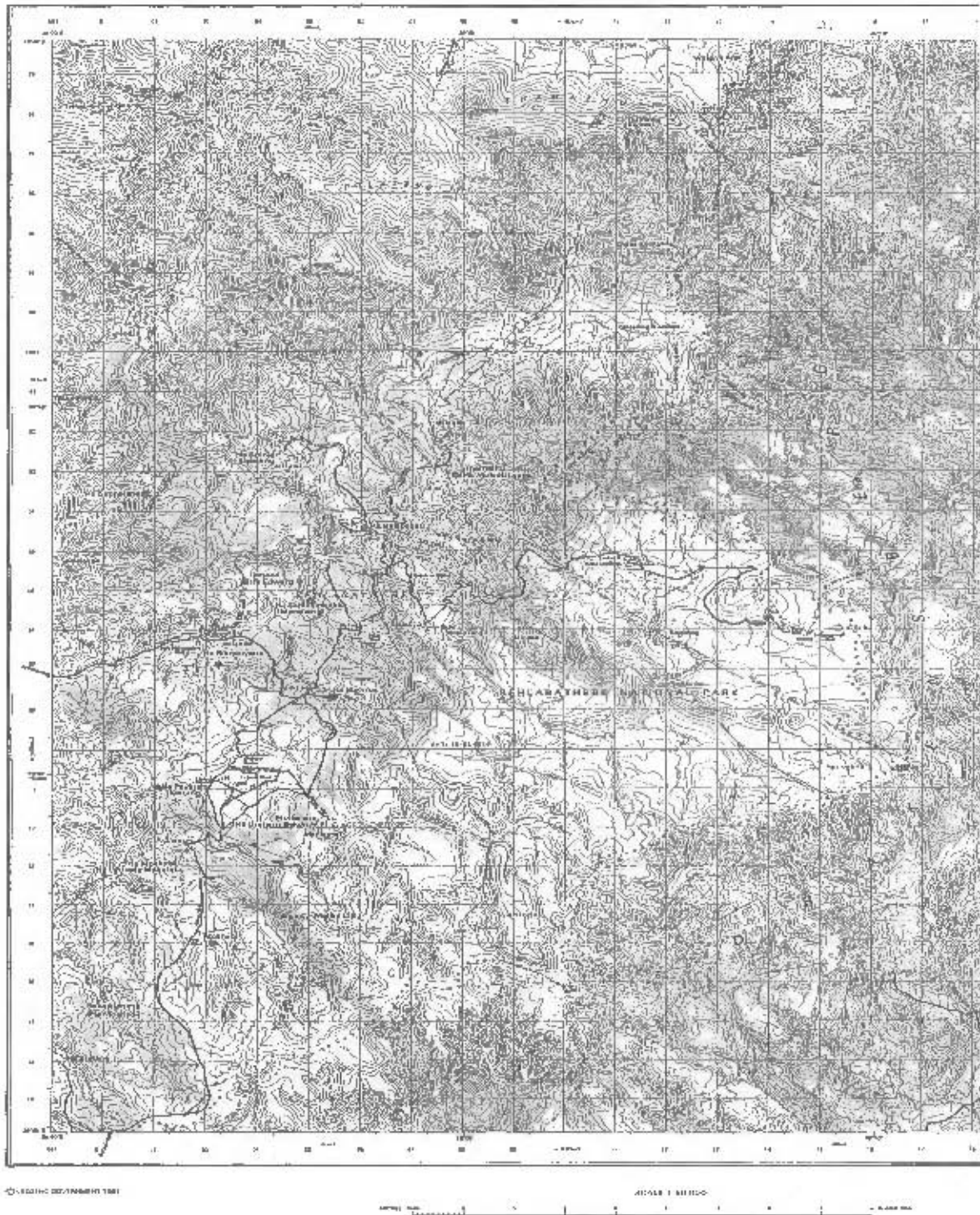
4. What role does your organization play in Sehlabathebe?
5. List 3 of the most immediate plans for Sehlabathebe that your organization deals with (*employment, resource protection, service provision, resource access*)?
6. What long term developments does the committee feel are needed in Sehlabathebe?
7. How was the decision reached to undertake those particular developments?
8. How do you plan to finance the envisioned developments?
9. Who do you work with and how?

APPENDIX 2

Map of Sehlabathebe. Proximity of study villages to the SNP.

LESOTHO 1:50,000
WITH PART OF REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SEHLABATHEBE



Source: Lesotho Government (1983)

APPENDIX 3

Common Land, Private Land, and Protected areas available to wildlife in southern Africa.

Table 5. Communal Land, Private Land, and Protected Areas Available to Wildlife in Southern African Countries

Wildlife Mgmt./Conservation	ANGOLA	BOTSWANA	LESOTHO	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE	NAMIBIA	S. AFRICA	SWAZILAND	TANZANIA	ZAMBIA	ZIMBABWE	TOTALS
Communal land:												
Game area (km ²)	?	120,074.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	50,000.0	0.0	0.0	90,000.0	160,488.0	12,000.0	432563.4
% of communal land	?	28.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.2	0.0	0.0	12.1	24.0	6.3	21.15
Private land:												
Game area (km ²)	?	1,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22,725.0	160,000.0	45.5	0.0	0.0	28,000.0	211770.5
% Private land	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1	17.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	20.3	16.86
No. farms	?	5.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	450.0	5,500.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	187.0	
% of farms	?	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.2	7.1	?	0.0	0.0	4.7	
State land (protected areas):												
Total area (km ²)	82,307.0	103,953.0	68.1	12,622.0	32,250.0	107,125.3	56,500.0	49.8	134,881.0	59,451.0	49,418.0	638625.2
% of country	6.8	17.3	0.2	10.7	4.1	13.0	4.6	0.3	15.2	7.9	12.7	11.62
No. protected areas	13.0	9.0	1.0	21.0	9.0	13.0	153.0	5.0	15.0	19.0	30.0	
Mean size (km ²)	6,331.3	11,550.3	68.1	601.0	3,583.3	8,240.4	369.3	10.0	8,992.1	3,129.0	1,647.3	
Total area under wildlife	?	225,027.4	68.1	12,622.0	32,251.0	179,650.3	216,500.0	95.3	224,881.0	219,939.0	89,418.0	1200652.1
% of country	?	37.5	0.2	13.4	4.1	21.8	17.7	0.5	25.4	29.2	22.9	25.56

Source: Partially updated from Cumming (1991).

APPENDIX 4

Itinerary of persons met

R. Ahal	Local government adviser (GTZ), MOLG, Maseru
T. Lepono	Project Ecologist, MDTP, Maseru
H. Lepheeane	Representative of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service, Ha Paulosi, Sehlabathebe
T. Makatjane	National University of Lesotho, Roma, and member of Administrative Boundaries Commission, Maseru
M. Molefi	Park warden, SNP, Sehlabathebe
Nkuebe	SNP manager, Sehlabathebe
M. Sam	Nurse, Community clinic, Ha Paulosi, Sehlabathebe
T. Tesele	Conservation Planner, MDTP, Maseru

4 local community councilors, Sehlabathebe

9 warden / village chiefs, Sehlabathebe

11 members of the SNP steering committee, Sehlabathebe

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